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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

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CONTENTS

THE AMERICAN CULTURAL SCENE

(II) CRITICISM, by *H. B. Parkes* *page* 2

THE IDEAS OF MACHIAVELLI, by *Grattan Freyer* 11

CLASSICS AND EDUCATION: A Note by *H. A. Mason* 32

MARLOWE'S 'DR. FAUSTUS,' by *James Smith* 36

EDMUND RUBBRA AND SYMPHONIC FORM, by *W. H. Mellers* 56

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS 72

THE BACKGROUND OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY LETTERS, reviews by Q. D. Leavis (p. 72). THE CENTRAL ALL-CONNECTING STUDY, *Interpretation in Teaching* reviewed by H. A. Mason (p. 78). THE METHOD AND THEORY OF THE BAUHAUS, *The New Vision* reviewed by Storm Jameson (p. 81). MR. C. S. LEWIS AND THE STATUS QUO, *Rehabilitations and Other Essays* reviewed by L. C. Knights (p. 88). ARNOLD'S THOUGHT, *Matthew Arnold* reviewed by F. R. Leavis (p. 92). THE FUNCTION OF SCIENCE, review of *The Social Function of Science* by C. E. Lucas (p. 100). MR. ELIOT'S NEW PLAY, *The Family Reunion* reviewed by Martin Turnell (p. 108). EUCLID ON HELICON, *The Poet's Defence* reviewed by R. O. C. Winkler (p. 114). MODERN POETS IN LOVE AND WAR, reviews by W. H. Mellers (p. 117).

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THE AMERICAN CULTURAL SCENE

(II) CRITICISM

THAT the history of literature in the United States has been largely a study in different types of frustration has become a critical commonplace. During the past quarter of a century it has had a vitality probably superior to that of the literature of any European nation ; and since its beginnings about a hundred years ago it has been capable of producing seminal ideas which, when transplanted into European soil, have often had an extraordinary influence. But what has never occurred in America is the normal and harmonious growth into maturity of a major talent. American literature has produced minor writers capable of perfection within a very limited range (Hawthorne, Emily Dickinson), writers of potential greatness thwarted and thrown off their balance by a lack of critical understanding and appreciation (Melville), mediocre writers swollen into the appearance of greatness by their mystical identification with Americanism (Emerson, Whitman), writers notable only for a perverse originality (Poe), writers with vitality but no cultural discipline (Mark Twain), and (the case with the majority of those now living) writers of limited scope who cultivate a single theme or a single stylistic technique and who then repeat themselves as often as their public will tolerate it. But with the exception of (perhaps) two expatriates, it has never had a literary master of the first rank.

The impediments to the intellectual life in America have been diagnosed so frequently during the past quarter of a century that an attitude of hostility to all that America represents became, for a period, more or less *de rigeur* among persons who liked to consider themselves as intellectuals ; and it is only within the last three or four years, since the growth of Fascism in Europe, that a patriotic reaction has set in. What is sometimes called the American Renascence, whose beginnings can be dated about the year 1912,

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was mainly a movement of self-criticism. Its most influential spokesman in its early days was Van Wyck Brooks, who published a number of essays deploring the lack of sound intellectual standards and whose attacks on the complacent provincialism which then characterized American cultural life were seconded by such writers as Lewis Mumford, Waldo Frank, and the late Randolph Bourne. During the cynical 'twenties, while half a dozen literary movements came and went, there was a prolonged assault on every front against the traditional ideals and institutions. The deficiencies of American culture were ascribed in turn to too much democracy and to too little democracy, to too much emotional repression and to too little emotional repression, to contempt for European standards and to subservience to Europe. Literary radicals devoted themselves to undermining every form of national complacency and to dissecting in long and dreary sociological novels every aspect of national life ; while academic conservatives, anxious to rationalize their fear of emotional freedom and their inability to understand the newer literary forms, rallied behind that eccentric Puritan revival known as Humanism. Finally, with the onset of the depression, most of these forms of protest became canalized into the left-wing political movement, and it was decided that the fundamental reason for all the intellectual maladies of America was the capitalist system.

The accomplishments of the Renascence were by no means despicable. Though it produced no great writer, it created a very luxuriant literary undergrowth. Its improvements of literary technique were considerable. It stimulated a popular interest in literature which is probably more widely diffused than in most European countries, and it elevated the general level of popular taste—as can be seen by contrasting any list of recent best-sellers with their prototypes of thirty years ago. It remains true, nevertheless, that frustration is the usual fate of the American writer, although it may take different forms than in the past. The democratization of the literary life is not an unmixed advantage, since writers who might have flourished in a relative obscurity are now exposed to the temptation of seeking enormous sales and to the need for winning and retaining the applause of metropolitan reviewers—a situation which accounts for the disappointing development of a number of promising careers. And while the New York

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press finds masterpieces among the mediocre and the immature, the more vigorous talents are under constant pressure both from their own consciences and from the Marxist critics to become Marxist propagandists. But whatever may be the political merits of a revolutionary programme, there is no doubt that the attempt to arouse the class consciousness of the proletariat and to follow all the deviations of the party line has had a paralysing effect on writers, who have continued to be productive only when (like James T. Farrell) they have escaped into Trotskyism or (like Dos Passos) they have abandoned their allegiance to any specific political programme. In spite of these instances the pressure to adhere to the orthodox party ideology is very considerable, particularly in the case of writers who cannot count on a large middle-class public ; and those who (like Waldo Frank) have identified themselves with the Communist movement and have afterwards left it are apt to find themselves without any audience at all.

The main cause for the frustration of the literary career in America is to be sought, no doubt, in the prevalent tastes and standards of criticism. Of talent and the desire to cultivate it there has been no lack ; but its healthy and harmonious development requires the appropriate critical environment. And by criticism in this sense is means not merely the analysis of what writers have actually done or set out to do—the task of the historian rather than the critic of literature—but the statement of what appropriately could or should be attempted in literature, of its general scope and function, and of its proper role in relation to the problems of social and individual morality. Criticism of this kind is prior to creation and serves to guide it ; and the practice of it necessarily involves a philosophical or religious view of the nature of man and of civilized living, and—if its literary fruits are to be healthy—is incompatible with any doctrines of mechanism or determinism. The importance of this kind of criticism, and the lack of it in twentieth-century America, has been emphasized in a recent book by Mrs. Colum, *From These Roots*, which traces the prevalent tendencies of modern European and American literature back through the French and English critics, Taine and Saint-Beuve, Wordsworth and Coleridge, to their origins in Lessing and Herder. As a simple and lucid introduction to the Romantic and

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post-Romantic movements—Mrs. Colum does not aspire to do more than this—the book can be strongly recommended. It is of particular interest in illustrating the fact that a new kind of literary creation is accompanied and preceded by a new kind of criticism, and because of Mrs. Colum's European background, which enables her to see American characteristics in perspective and to show how the ideas which appear as novelties in the New York of the nineteen-thirties were commonplaces in the Paris of two or three generations ago.

If American culture is viewed in the broad perspectives which Mrs. Colum's study suggests, it may be doubted whether American critics have ever given writers the kind of guidance which they need or whether the literary reformers have ever been sufficiently fundamental in their diagnoses. Roughly speaking, critical programmes have followed two main tendencies: American writers have been urged to create an American literature, something which would be different from any European literature and which would express the democratic greatness and destiny of the New World ; or they have been expected to set themselves up as religious or political reformers, calling attention to the evils of the national life and proclaiming a way of salvation. The great exemplar of the former of these tendencies was Emerson, whose faith in America was imbued with a vague mystical belief in divine guidance derived from a fusion of his ancestral Puritanism with German Romantic philosophy. What Americanism means remains, however, obscure ; it is a mysticism almost devoid of content, and definable only by negatives. In practice, it is apt to mean that literature should be formless, gargantuan and all-inclusive because America is like that (as in the poetry of Whitman, or the novels of Thomas Wolfe), or that some indefinable mystical emotion should attach itself to the American soil and the achievements of American technology (as in the poetry of Hart Crane). The latter tendency—the belief that the artist should be a reformer—has been the dominant motif in criticism for the last quarter of a century. It was the favourite idea of Van Wyck Brooks, whose destructive analyses of the American cultural scene showed a remarkable insight but who apparently believed that what was needed to regenerate America was the appearance of a number of American H. G. Wellses. Literature, in other words, was to be an instrument of the will—

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a conception which the more influential writers of the last generation have faithfully endeavoured to realize. To what concrete ends the will was to be directed has, however, remained obscure. The school of Van Wyck Brooks has been admirable in pointing out to what extent American life fell short of civilized standards ; but of what civilization itself consists has remained undefined.

These critical tendencies should perhaps be regarded as an expression of those same forces whose cruder manifestations they have opposed ; American critics, in other words, have not been sufficiently radical. The three factors which have had the greatest influence in creating the American psychology are the Puritan view of life, the conquest of the American continent, and the industrial system. Their combined effect has been to create a hypertrophy of the will, which results in the domination rather than the qualitative appreciation of an environment. The American is concerned not with the sympathetic understanding of objects, as qualitative wholes, but with the abstraction from the real world of those aspects of it which can be used. Reality loses its sensuous fulness, and becomes a complex of abstract and bloodless lines of force. From this tendency can be traced all the more conspicuous traits of the American, or—more accurately, perhaps—of the Anglo-Saxon American of the Northern states: his peculiarly rootless and, as it were, disembodied intellectuality and idealism, which is combined with a lack of sensuous richness and of strong emotional attachments, his pragmatic and utilitarian philosophy, his restless energy, and his inability to convey in his physical environment any sense of harmony, of mutual adjustment, between man and nature. These characteristics, which are almost the negation of the æsthetic attitude, reappear in American literature. America, as the mystic entity postulated by Emerson and Whitman, becomes a bloodless abstraction consisting not of concrete specific places and people but of names on a map and undifferentiated specimens of the genus Man. The literature of social exposure and reform is concerned not with things in themselves but with usable aspects of them. Its trend is always towards satire, and instead of drawing human beings in their totality, it depicts them as grotesque or sub-human and as the mechanistic victims of social forces—tendencies from which very few of the American novelists of the last quarter of a century have been immune. What American

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literature requires from its critics, therefore, is not so much any re-orientation of the will, any re-definition of American ideals, as simply the assertion of the æsthetic attitude as an independent mode of apprehension, having as its function the defining of the real world in its sensuous concreteness. And those contemporary writers who have set out to record the American scene rather than to change it—for example, William Carlos Williams—have probably contributed more to the growth of an indigenous culture than all the prophets of the mystical America and the proletarian revolution.

The past two decades have, nevertheless, been a time of increasing critical maturity ; and in spite of the efforts of the Humanists and the Marxists to use literature in behalf of specific programmes of moral and political improvement, there are a growing number of writers capable of judging literature by the insight which it gives rather than by the kind of activity which it is likely to promote. As proof of this can be cited the large body and range of criticism contained in a recent anthology edited by Morton Dauwen Zabel, *Literary Opinion in America*. This gives a very adequate representation of recent critical trends, and contains a number of those scrupulous and detailed studies of individual authors which were stimulated by such magazines as *The Hound and Horn* and *The Symposium* and which have been undertaken by such writers as R. P. Blackmur, Philip Blair Rice, William Troy, and Mr. Zabel himself.

What emerges both from this anthology and from other recent books is the inability of those who approach literature in social and political terms to provide any genuinely æsthetic guidance. Marxist reviewers in such organs as *The New Masses* proclaim, of course, that the writer must arouse the revolutionary consciousness of the masses ; but Marxist critics who are sensitive to literary values usually confine themselves to elucidating what actually has been done by writers in the past. The Marxist approach may account for the content of a work of art, but it cannot say what gives that content artistic value. The two ablest left-wing critics are, no doubt, Mr. Edmund Wilson and Mr. Kenneth Burke, of whom the former is not a Communist but would probably call himself a Marxist, while the latter is not an orthodox Marxist but supports the Communist Party. Mr. Wilson writes a better prose than any other American critic, and his study of the symbolist

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movement, *Axel's Castle*, is probably the finest piece of literary history which has been written in America. His most recent volume, *The Triple Thinkers*, a collection of scattered essays on such subjects as Pushkin, Housman, Shaw, James, and Marxism and Literature, exhibits the same virtues and the same deficiencies ; it contains admirable examinations of authors of the past but offers little critical guidance to authors of the future. The implication is always that writers should be politically conscious, but how their political intelligence ought to express itself in their work remains somewhat obscure. Mr. Burke once wrote a book called *Counter-Statement*, in which he proclaimed a necessary opposition between the writer and whatever forces were socially dominant, and made a valuable study of literary form in terms of the psychology of the audience. Since adopting Communism, he has published *Attitudes Towards History*, which may be described as an anatomy of the non-rational factors in social change. By studying the social development of western civilization in terms of its effects in the emotional development of individuals, he is able to co-ordinate social and literary criticism, and to provide a general framework within which different authors can be placed. Reversing the usual Marxist procedure, he argues not that literature should express political forces but that coming political changes express themselves first in literature ; art is a social barometer which indicates the rise and fall of social systems. Mr. Burke has an unusually wide range of information, and a very rich, though a very perverse, mind. He can be trusted to propound ideas which would not have occurred to anyone else, but their value is often dubious. Like other left-wing writers, however, he has become a historian rather than a critic of literature.[1]

For a criticism which deals with the future of literature and not merely with its past, one must turn to writers who are concerned with æsthetic experience itself. Of these the most important are Mr. Yvor Winters and Mr. Allen Tate.

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[1]One might also cite the case of Van Wyck Brooks, who emerged from a long retirement to produce, in *The Flowering of New England*, an elaborate reconstruction of New England culture between 1820 and 1860 which contained no critical judgments whatever.

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Mr. Winter's two volumes, *Primitivism and Decadence* and *Maule's Curse*, are examinations of contemporary poetry and of certain leading American writers of the nineteenth century, and are the beginnings of an ambitious project for a revaluation of all American literature. For Mr. Winters æsthetic creation is in itself a moral act in that it means the apprehension and ordering of emotional experience ; a complete mastery of the experience will be accompanied by a corresponding mastery of the technique of communication, so that literary form and metric acquire a kind of moral significance. For Mr. Winters most modern poetry is decadent, its obscurity and the weaknesses of its formal organization indicating an inability to achieve a full grasp of the experience which is being communicated. In *Maule's Curse* he traces a similar deficiency in the New England group of writers and finds its ultimate cause in the moral obscurantism of Puritanism. As a statement of critical principles Mr. Winters's work deserves wide attention. That it has not received that attention, and that reviewers have consistently misunderstood it, is chiefly because of the eccentricities of Mr. Winters's critical practice. His judgments of particular authors, which are always boldly defiant of conventional opinions, are often convincing, but have one outstanding weakness: an inability to distinguish between writers who achieve formal mastery through a genuine mastery of experience and those who use the traditional forms but never grapple with experience at all. Thus Mr. Winters admires Robert Bridges, Sturge Moore, and a lady called Mrs. Daryush (a daughter of Robert Bridges) and sets them above writers whose technical failures are caused by a genuine attempt to extend the boundaries of poetic experience. Mr. Allen Tate, on the other hand, is probably the most reliable critic of poetry now writing in the United States, and some of the studies of particular poets in his *Reactionary Essays* (a book which was handicapped by its unnecessarily provocative title) can be regarded as definitive. The most important essay in that volume is, however, *Three Types of Poetry*, in which he distinguishes between poetry which aims simply at an imaginative grasp of the totality of experience, poetry which makes itself an instrument of the practical will (and which must therefore allegorize, and abstract from, experience), and poetry which, identifying the abstractions made by the practical

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will with reality and finding them unsatisfying, reacts into romantic individualism, irony or despair. During the past two centuries, according to Mr. Tate, poetry has belonged predominantly to the second and third types, but when imaginative writers attempt to provide incentives to action they are missing their true function.

Mr. Winters and Mr. Tate approach literature from different angles, but their fundamental beliefs are similar ; and those beliefs are shared by a considerable group of writers, most of whom live either in the South or in California. One might, for example, cite Mr. John Crowe Ransom (who once wrote an admirable book about religion called *God Without Thunder*), the author of *The World's Body*. Long immersion in an academic environment appears, however, to have had the most unfortunate effects on Mr. Ransom's style, and his critical ideas, which are similar to Mr. Tate's, are so encrusted in a belle-lettristic archness and coyness that it is a laborious task to disentangle them.

The critical approach represented by these men is peculiarly valuable because it means that, for almost the first time in America, literature is being studied as an æsthetic creation and not merely as an incentive to some particular kind of activity, moralistic or political, or as an expression of some nationalistic ideal. This assertion of æsthetic autonomy would appear, nevertheless, to have moral and political implications ; a belief in æsthetic autonomy involves a belief in moral autonomy, and such a belief is incompatible with any mechanistic or deterministic view of human nature, and perhaps with any collectivist political programme. It raises the problem, moreover, of the relationship, and possible inter-dependence, between the imaginative apprehension of experience in poetry and the analogous apprehension achieved through religious doctrine. Mr. Tate has been especially concerned with these questions, and would define himself as a distributivist and a traditionalist and, probably, as sympathetic to organized religion. But though a thorough-going revaluation of the whole of the American way of life is implicit in the attitudes of that group of Southerners to which he belongs, it has not yet achieved any clear or definitive formulation.

H. B. PARKES.

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The World's Body, by John Crowe Ransom (Scribners).
(Scribners).

THE IDEAS OF MACHIAVELLI

'. . . nè mai potette vincere per fraude, ch'ei cercasse di vincere per forza; perchè diceva, che la vittoria, non il modo della vittoria ti arrecava gloria.'

'. . . nor did he ever seek to vanquish by force, where he might conquer by cunning; for he was wont to say, that victory, not the means of victory, brought thee glory.'

From the *Life of Castruccio Castracani*.

NO writer has had a more varied reception than Machiavelli, during the four centuries since his death. Dying unnoticed, his name was soon to be associated by every side with their opponents in the European polemics of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Huguenots attributed St. Bartholomew's Night to his council, in England he was coupled indiscriminately with St. Ignatius or with the Devil himself, while the Jesuits produced a long series of tracts against him. The nineteenth century brought a swing right over, in his rehabilitation by Italian patriots; the twentieth has brought the beginnings of a more scientific criticism. The study of Machiavelli's reputation forms an interesting survey in the relativity of criticism, and I hope, later, to offer a study on such lines. At this stage, it is superfluous to attack, and should be unnecessary to defend, the Secretary of Florence—

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particularly after Mr. Eliot's stimulating account (in *For Lancelot Andrewes*). Nevertheless, Machiavelli remains popularly associated with the cause of dictatorship, a view expressly fostered by Mussolini himself (see his *Preface to ' The Prince '*), and which has even been the occasion of an article by Mr. Kingsley Martin (' He taught the Dictators ' in a number of *Lilliput* last year—where the author, incidentally, gives no indication of having read any work but *The Prince*).

Thus before such a study as I have suggested can be undertaken, it is necessary to examine exactly what Machiavelli's thought and work consisted of. This is not simple. For in the rapidly changing circumstances of life in the late Renaissance Machiavelli never managed to order his ideas into a definite philosophic system (in the way that Dante did earlier)—what we are left with is plenty of far-sighted observation and analysis, together with certain loyalties, or enthusiasms, which certainly constitute an outlook, but not a ' system ' in the ordinary sense. In analysing this outlook a certain pedantry is unavoidable, since it is essential, in face of all the criticism that has arisen, to know not only what is written down, but the circumstances in which it was written, because Machiavelli's life bears a very direct relationship to what he wrote. This must be my apology for some insistence on historic detail, and also for frequent quotation, or, where lack of space limits this, for indicating the passage under discussion by footnotes. (Since chapters in the principal works are short, and editions many, I shall not give page references).

I.

Machiavelli's loyalties in contemporary politics were three. In varying, sometimes conflicting, degrees he felt himself an Italian, a Florentine, and a republican. We shall have to consider what he understood by each of these ' patriotisms ' in turn, and to do this we must trace the main events in Italian history at the end of the Renaissance. Machiavelli's active life falls almost exactly into the most critical period, that from Lorenzo de' Medici's death in 1492 to the Sack of Rome in 1527.

In the confused record of the invasions which in Italy followed the fall of the Roman Empire, we can early distinguish a dominant motif—the attempt of the Popes, by allying themselves with

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powerful strangers, to establish a temporal dominion on Italian soil, and the efforts of the Emperor to resist this. In the long struggle between the two potentates, numerous provinces managed to wrest their freedom from the feudal contract, and by the middle of the fifteenth century not only France and Spain were strong independent powers, but Milan, Florence, Venice, and many smaller principalities governed themselves autonomously. Naples was probably the only recognized fief in Italy, and was disputed between Spanish and French princes. Milan too was a disputed title, claimed by the Emperor, the dukes of Orleans, and the local Sforza dynasty. Florence was dominated by the rich family of the Medici, and held most of Tuscany, including Pisa. Venice was by far the strongest Italian power: an aristocratic republic, still powerful overseas and always ready to encroach on the mainland. The papal states stretching up as far as Bologna were ruled by petty tyrants or governors. Machiavelli was to raise a bitter criticism of the papacy, in asserting that by not being strong enough to bring all Italy under one ruler, yet strong enough to prevent another from doing so, she held the country disunited and weak, a prey ' not only to powerful foreigners, but to whoever assaults her.'[1]

' Corruption ' in Italy—what we should call decadence—was universally recognized. Savonarola, Machiavelli, Pico della Mirandola, and several popes, all saw and criticized this ' corruption,' in their own ways. The licence of the clergy was a commonplace ; and the country was ravaged by the mercenary adventurers who turned their swords for the highest bidder—another subject for the rasping criticism of Machiavelli. Allied to the general feeling of corruption was the almost equally universal fear of invasion. Savonarola foretold the coming of the French king as the scourge of Italy ; the Popes summoned crusades against the Turk ; Venice feared the Emperor ; while Machiavelli in a wild moment suggested that the Swiss would be the conquering Romans of the day. Soon after Lorenzo the Magnificent's death the gathering storm broke.

In 1494 Charles VIII of France crossed the Alps and made his way without serious resistance down to Naples, which he occupied. On the way he overturned the constitutions of a number of states, including that of Florence, who drove out the Medici

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and established a republic under French protection ; Pisa profited to seize her independence. In the following year Charles was driven from Naples. But in 1498, a new king, Louis XII, was crowned, uniting the titles of Milan and Naples to France. In the same year he seized Milan, after coming to an agreement with Pope Alexander VI.

The terms of this agreement were a French title and marriage alliance for the Pope's favourite son, Cæsar Borgia, who now became Duke Valentine. The next few years in Italy were mainly concerned with the Duke's campaign in the Romagna to found a central Italian monarchy for himself, and in spite of initial disadvantages, and a large scale mutiny of his officers, he was within an ace of succeeding, when his father died suddenly in 1503. The subsequently elected Pope, Julius II, rapidly reduced the Duke's power to ruins. Valentine's meteoric career must be remembered in relation to Machiavelli's work.

The first important move of the new Pope was to set out in person to assert his authority over the Papal States, and he soon recovered all except those held by Venice. He now made overtures to France, Spain, England and the Emperor for an alliance ; in 1508 the famous League of Cambrai was signed, which rapidly defeated Venetian power. But no sooner had this been achieved than the Pope found himself intolerably threatened by his former ally, the French king, who now dominated northern Italy, while Florence and Ferrara were his close allies. The remainder of Julius II's pontificate was directed towards driving the French from Italy. In this he was helped by Spain, anxious to end all French pretensions to Naples, and by the enemies of the Florentine republic, as well as by the direct enemies of France. By 1512, the French were defeated, the Medici re-instated in Florence, and a descendant of the Sforza ruled Milan.

Spain was now undisputed ruler of southern, and predominant in central, Italy. That alliance which was to make the papacy a practical vassal of Spanish interests for the next half-century was appearing. The already powerful Charles V was elected Emperor in 1519, and an initial war made him master of Milan. A frenzied attempt by Pope Clement VII to re-create the balance of power resulted in the Holy League of Cognac. But the anarchic forces of this league were easily routed by the Emperor, and Rome was

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sacked in May, 1527. In Florence, the Medici were once more overthrown, and a republican government withstood siege for another three years, but since Machiavelli died in 1527, subsequent history need not concern us.

II.

That was what Machiavelli saw as an Italian patriot. Much of his theoretical work is concerned with events and policies leading up to 1512. But as a Florentine, and a servant of the republic, he was more intimately interested in the politics of his native city.

Born in 1496, of middle-bourgeois parents, he probably received a not exceptional humanistic education ; he entered an unimportant government service in 1494, and four years later was promoted to a sort of chancellorship, where he acted as secretary and adviser to the Council of Ten. He seems rapidly to have gained their confidence: while the republic lasted, wherever there was delicate business of state on hand the Secretary of Florence was sent, sometimes with fairly precise instructions, but always, and sometimes only, to make the best use possible of his eyes and ears and report everything to the Council.

In the politics of the Renaissance, Florence was very small fry. Too weak ever to take an independent lead, her policy consisted in continually readjusting by astute diplomacy her relations with the stronger powers in an endeavour to maintain her liberties and her territorial integrity.

Between the end of 1498 and 1502, Machiavelli was sent on a number of missions in Tuscany, mostly concerned with the attempt to re-subdue Pisa and the surrounding revolted districts. In 1500 he visited the court of France to ask her aid against Pisa. In this early period, as well as the numerous letters to the government, he wrote three minor reports, concerning the dissensions.

During the following winter he visited the court of Cæsar Borgia and was present at Sinigaglia when the Duke rid himself of his rebellious henchmen in the very thorough manner that has made his name famous in history. Shortly after this was composed Machiavelli's first controversial work, the *Description of the method employed by Duke Valentine in killing Vitellozzo Vitelli, Oliverotto da Fermo, the lord Pagolo and the duke Gravina Orsini* (1503).

Follow some minor missions near home, in the course of which

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he delivered a discourse to the government strongly criticizing the use of mercenaries in the Pisan campaign—a theme which remained dear to him—and then at the end of 1503 he was sent on another important and interesting mission, to Rome for the conclaves following the death of Alexander VI. Here his only duty was to inform the government of everything that passed, so that they might take the necessary steps to safeguard their interests. His official letters give a fascinating picture of the intrigues round the Roman conclaves. Julius II is duly elected, the Secretary hastens to offer the formal allegiance of the republic, but continues to watch anxiously the issue of the old enmity between the new Pope and the Duke Valentine. As soon as it becomes certain that the Duke is no longer to be reckoned with, Machiavelli is recalled. During the relative inaction of the next year or two, he composed and published the first and second of his *Decennali*, verses describing the events of the preceding years in Italy.

Meanwhile the Pisan war was dragging on, and finally, all other methods having failed, the council gave Machiavelli authority to carry out his plan for instituting the national militia he had so enthusiastically recommended. For a while he was very busy travelling through the Florentine territories enrolling soldiers under the new ordinances. This work was interrupted from time to time for foreign missions, notably one to the Emperor Maximilian, who was threatening to invade Italy ; this gave Machiavelli his first personal contact with Germany, and he subsequently wrote the three reports concerning the affairs of the Empire. On his return, he brought the war to a conclusion by laying waste the surrounding territory on a hitherto unprecedented scale, and simply starving the city into subjection. Machiavelli—here is a characteristic sidelight on his idealism—attributed this victory exclusively to the virtues of the new militia, an illusion that was to cost Florence dear before long.

Events were now moving towards the decisive rupture between Julius II and France. Up to this, under Soderini, Florence had been the close ally of France, but had also been careful to propitiate the Pope. This had served while the two acted in unison, but it now became fatally necessary to choose, since France demanded active support, while the Pope would certainly tolerate nothing less than neutrality. Machiavelli was sent to France to postpone

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as long as possible any decision, but Florence was already too far committed: the enemies of the republic were intriguing with the Papal league, and the defeat of the French, and the cowardly surrender of the militia, brought the restoration of the Medici.

Soderini was exiled, and his faithful servant Machiavelli deprived of office. Shortly afterwards the ex-Secretary was arrested on suspicion of complicity in a plot to restore the republic, of which he appears to have been innocent, was tortured, and, on release, banished for a year from the city.

1513 finds Machiavelli in his villa at San Casciano in extreme poverty, and—what he liked still less—in enforced idleness. In a letter to his friend, Francesco Vettori, ambassador in Rome (who had made his peace with the Medici as soon as he saw which way the wind was blowing), he describes how he spends his time. After a day passed dejectedly gaming with the peasants of his estate, when evening comes, he dons his courtier's robes, and then, forgetting every worry, consumes the hours diligently consulting the great statesmen of the past and present: it is in this same letter that he announces the composition of the *Prince*, 'and if any of my chatter ever pleased you, this should not displease you; and to a prince, and above all to a new prince, it should be acceptable; therefore I am addressing it to his Majesty Giuliano . . . ' He goes on to ask Vettori whether it were better to send it, or to present it, to Giuliano de' Medici, and then adds in pathetic terms his wish to be employed by 'these Medici lords, even if I must begin by rolling stones.'[2] But Machiavelli hesitated so long over presenting his *opuscolo* that Giuliano died in the meantime and it had to be re-dedicated to the young Duke Lorenzo; apparently it was ultimately presented, but there is no evidence as to how it was received, or whether it was even read.

Machiavelli was to remain unemployed for some seven years. Over the first part of this period he seems to have composed the bulk of his *Discourses over the first Decade of Titus Livy*, parts of which were read in a sort of Platonic academy of young Florentines who used to meet in a garden near the city. *The Art of War* (1520) was written in dialogue for the same audience, and sometime during his political inactivity, Machiavelli composed his comedies (which were not however performed until some years

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later), the *Tale of Belfagor the Archdevil*, and a number of poems and minor works.

Through his younger friends in the academy, Machiavelli was now gradually brought into favour with the Medici, and particularly with the Cardinal Giulio, later Clement VII. In 1519 he composed the short but significant *Discourse on the reform of Florence*, probably by request of Leo X. Soon after this he was employed by the Cardinal Giulio on a small mission to Lucca. While there he wrote his *Summary of the Affairs of Lucca* and the more important *Life of Castruccio Castracani of Lucca* (1520), this also dedicated to friends in the young academy.

On his return he was commissioned by the Cardinal to write the *Florentine Histories* (not completed until 1527), and sent on one or two small journeys of state. After some hesitation the new Pope Clement VII made up his mind to employ him in the papal service, and for the last two years of Machiavelli's life he was actively employed. In 1526 he wrote a report on the defences of Florence. During the next twelve months he was sent on three separate missions to Francesco Guicciardini, Papal governor in the Romagna. Letters show the two of them to have watched with culminating dismay the events bringing Italian liberty to an end. There is a picturesque story that, when the Medici partisans were overthrown in Florence, Machiavelli again offered his services to his cherished republic, was again refused because of complicity in the government which had just been ousted, and took poison or died of a broken heart. At all events, Niccolò Machiavelli died obscurely, after receiving the last sacraments, in his native city, on the 22nd of June, 1527, aged fifty-nine years.

III.

If we now turn to consider the general character of Machiavelli's written works, taking them in chronological order we can early distinguish two divergent tendencies. To begin with, Machiavelli was a minor diplomat, and such a position involved something of the function of a modern journalist writing on foreign affairs. This is the origin not only of the comprehensive series of letters in the *Legations*, but of the several reports such as those concerning Pisa, France, and Germany. But already in the *Discourse on Pisa* (1499), there is discernible an interest divorced from immediate

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practical affairs, a creative interest in politics for the sake of politics. In the *Method for treating the rebelled peoples of the Valdichiana* (1502) this tendency is further evident, and is now backed by a rather pompous argument on classical precedent; in the *Description of the method of Duke Valentine* (1503), it is dominant. Here we have an imaginative account which conflicts factually with the writer's own reports in his official letters. The *Description* is evidently an attempt to re-create the methods of firm political action, while provisionally disregarding the end towards which they are directed. Thus while the letters were preoccupied with the problem of the growth and menace to Florence of the Duke's power, the *Description* is, if not frankly admiring, at least non-critical of its protagonist.

This urge towards independent creation remained constant to Machiavelli throughout his life. At intervals he composed and translated a number of plays, and a small quantity of not very distinguished, though at times poignant verses. (As it happened, these were almost the only parts of his writings to achieve general recognition during his life-time). In this group of imaginative writings we must include the *Life of Castruccio* and the conventionally humorous *Belfagor*. Among the more or less official works fall the *Florentine Histories*, written on commission, of slight general interest. But in the *Prince*, the *Discourses over the first Decade of Titus Livy* and the *Art of War*, both elements of the preceding works are fused. The impulse is creative, but the accomplished work is closely correlated with experienced fact, and the aim is on the whole practical, although they are no longer addressed to an established government, but to an ideal audience of disinterested politicians. There is some justification for regarding these three works as a trilogy, since a number of cross-references show that the author intended them to be read in conjunction.

I have mentioned that Machiavelli's outlook was strongly influenced by certain loyalties in his political environment, and I must now add two further factors in his thought. The first is a fundamentally scientific interest in the sheer mechanism of political action: this is best shown in relation to the *Discourses*. The second is the common stock of humanism shared by the men of the Renaissance, consisting in a fervent admiration for the heroes of

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antiquity and a sometimes uncritical acceptance of their precedents whether in literature, politics or art.

What Machiavelli took of humanism for himself can best be seen in the use he makes of certain key-words. Like every great Italian writer, Machiavelli is able to build into certain terms meanings which only derive their full significance from a comprehension of the author's entire work. Thus for Dante *virtù, intelletto* have a specialized, almost technical meaning. In Machiavelli, the important terms are *virtù, la fortuna,* and *la gloria. Virtù* has nothing to do with Dante's use of the same word, nor with the English 'virtue.' It might perhaps be rendered 'manliness': it is essentially a-moral, in fact it cuts clean across moral values, so that while Piero Soderini may have been full of *bontà,* or 'goodness,' he was completely devoid of *virtù*[3], and similarly it is possible in the same phrase to refer to the Emperor Severus as *scellerato* (a rascal) and to his *grandissima virtù*[4]. *La fortuna,* or Fortune, covers a quaint feeling of a pagan goddess of destiny. If a man has both *virtù* and Fortune with him he will achieve *la gloria.* With Fortune but without *virtù* he may achieve success, but not *la gloria.* Without Fortune, however abundant his *virtù,* he is foredoomed to failure, as was Cæsar Borgia, whose final undoing proceeded not from his mistakes, but 'from an extraordinary and extreme malignity of fortune.'[5] And be it noted in passing that here Fortune favours not only the brave, but the young and impetuous: 'like a woman she is a lover of the young, because they are less respectful, more ferocious, and with greater audacity command her.'[6] The union of *virtù* and Fortune then constitutes *la gloria,* or immortal renown. Again the idea is only pragmatically moral, 'glory' comes neither from closet virtue nor from selfishly ambitious achievement, it must be civic renown, and in the constant flux of warring peoples, civic renown becomes inevitably military renown, almost inevitably military conquest. The striving of individuals to achieve this is the prime motive force in history, resulting in the rise of certain states to domination and material wealth; they then tend to become corrupted by luxury, this leads to corruption of the individuals, who become indifferent to civic virtue and the common weal, become avaricious and ambitious, and this leads to tyranny and final decline. Thus we come at the cyclic conception of history which is at the core of

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much of Machiavelli's thought.

The working out of these concepts can be seen clearly in the *Life of Castruccio Castracani of Lucca.*

IV.

The Description of the method of Duke Valentine was a foretaste of what was to be achieved in the *Life of Castruccio.* Historically it is notoriously inaccurate. Villari has called it 'a little politico-military romance.' The effect of it on the reader is just that of an entertaining fiction. As such it is superb. It has a finely tragic rise-and-fall about it—something like the *Tamberlaine* of Marlowe. It tells how Castruccio grew up from his lowly origin to rule over several provinces, of his great feats of arms and his greater feats in cunning, it tells of his death after taking a fever on the field of battle, and of his instructions to his heir, and it ends with a long list of sayings attributed to him, many of them conventional, many of them witty and amusing, whether they be original or not. The role attributed to Fortune appears in Castruccio's words on the point of death: 'Could I have foreseen, dear Son, that Fortune would thus have cut me off in the middle of my course towards that glory which I had promised myself from the uncommon success of my undertakings hitherto, I would have been less solicitous to extend my conquests . . . and have left thee possessed of a dominion, if less extensive, certainly more secure and better established.' But Fortune tempted him, 'like a woman,' and like Cæsar Borgia, he died leaving an Empire broad, but turbulent, which fell to pieces on his death.

But the interest of this work for us is greater than its intrinsic value as a prose epic. For it happens to be the only part of Machiavelli's work where he illustrated the whole man of the ideal that found its purely political expression in the *Prince.* Moreover, while the established form of the *Prince* was undeniably biassed by the circumstances of its dedication, *Castruccio* was addressed to an audience of personal friends, so it may reasonably be taken as a more sincere and direct—I should say a 'purer'—expression of the author's ideal. Historical detail was clearly irrelevant to the main idea, since it conflicts factually with the Castruccio described in Machiavelli's own *Florentine Histories.* To some

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extent the *Prince* and *Castruccio* seem complementary. What is explicitly described in the poised reasoning of the *Prince* is implicit in *Castruccio*. Castruccio takes the political maxims of the *Prince* in his stride, as also the theories expressed in the *Art of War*.

It is worth noting a further point: Castruccio's attitude to private morality. Here is a plain negative answer, if one was ever necessary, to the question, did Machiavelli recommend the same morality in private life as in public affairs? History is actually distorted to show Castruccio's personal integrity in private life. (Machiavelli makes Castruccio a bastard, adopted by a Lucchese gentleman ; in fact, Castruccio was legitimate: and he died leaving legitimate heirs, but Machiavelli makes him say on his death-bed to the son of his former benefactor: 'I have never taken wife, lest natural affection should have prevented me in any part from showing that affection to the seed of thy father which I held to be due.') Immediately before the quotation with which I have headed this paper comes the affirmation: 'He was grateful to his friends, to his enemies terrible, just among his subjects, faithless to the unfaithful.' Thus *Castruccio* touches lightly but decisively on a subject over which controversy has arisen, and about which Machiavelli never troubled to express himself elsewhere in his work.

V.

As the title indicates, the *Discourses on the first Decade of Titus Livy* do not form, as the *Prince* does, a consistent treatise. They are in fact simply a commentary on someone else's history (Livy is relatively unimportant) and matters of political interest are discussed as they arise. Apart from this there is no co-ordinated scheme. This makes it a difficult work to approach. For although the bulk of the arguments put forward seem to favour republican government, there are numerous exceptions to this: as it stands the *Discourses* may best be regarded as notes and discussions concerning government, from which the author might, had circumstances demanded, have selected the relevant material for a treatise on republics by exactly the same method he used in composing the *Prince*. The *Discourses* are in fact the reservoir of observation and reflection for both the *Prince* and the *Art of War*. (The latter is little more than a technical elaboration of certain chapters in the *Discourses*, embodying Machiavelli's theoretical conclusions in

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favour of a national militia, and of well-trained infantry against cavalry). In spite of this general looseness in structure, however, it is possible to disentangle a fairly consistent skein of doctrines, which may be taken to constitute Machiavelli's outlook on the world.

The initial assumption of the *Discourses* is that common to the humanists, that of the pedagogic value of history: by the analysis of successful and unsuccessful action in the past, whose results are now evident, one may learn what to imitate and what to avoid. But what is the most remarkable quality of these discussions is the complete absence of prejudice with which they are usually conducted. Not only are the rulers of classical antiquity called relentlessly into the dock, and made to answer for their success or failure, but the same method is applied to the rulers of the present and immediate past, whether they be popes, princes, Florentines or Frenchmen. Interest is focussed on laying bare the effective mechanism of government. This should not be taken to contradict what I have said regarding enthusiasm for certain contemporary causes, for these too are subjected to the same unremitting scrutiny—whose actions could be more piercingly analysed than those of the author's personal friend, Piero Soderini, head of the government which Machiavelli risked his livelihood to uphold?

> 'He believed that time, humanity (*bontà*), his own good fortune, and beneficence, would extinguish envy; for he was young and found himself surrounded by so many friends, attracted by his munificent procedure, that he thought to extinguish the envy of his opponents without violence or scandal: and he did not know that time will wait for no man, humanity is not enough, fortune varies, and malice is not appeased by any good favour.'[15]

Even the evidently false conclusion underestimating the effects of gunfire in war was only arrived at after detailed examination of all the evidence then available.[16] While the majority of discussions take place from the viewpoint of good republican government, not infrequently the same situation is reconsidered from the opposite angle. Thus a discussion of how tyranny arose under the decemvirs in Rome ends typically:

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> 'Be it known, therefore, by this discourse, the errors of the Roman people wishing to save its liberty; and the errors of Appius wishing to occupy the dictatorship (*tirannide*)'[17]

in which the double edge of the *Discourses* is clear.

Morality, in the sense of a preconceived code having a general application, is excluded. Political morality is severed from private morality, and rarely does a private ethic intrude on a political judgment, and then it is only mentioned to be dismissed in favour of expediency:

> 'Although to use deceit in any action is detestable, nevertheless in conducting war it is praiseworthy and glorious.'[18]

Or, more forcibly, after advocating Philip of Macedon's example of violently transplanting colonies:

> 'These methods are very cruel, and inimical to all good living, not only Christian but human; and any man should flee them, and choose rather to live privately, than as king at such cost in human suffering: nevertheless, he who will not follow that first path of virtue, *if he wish to maintain himself*, will be constrained to enter this way of evil. But men take certain middle ways which are most harmful; for they do not know how to be either entirely wicked, or entirely good.'[19] (italics mine).

Here we see the paradoxical relativity of moral judgment as it appeared to Machiavelli—only too easily a good man may be a bad ruler, and the converse.[20] And since posterity judges politicians by the effect of their actions, not by their motives, a premium is set on success, and therefore on strong government.

In evaluating this concept of good, or strong, government we may for convenience reduce it to this: a free city may be ruled as a Principality, Aristocracy, or by Popular Government (democracy), but these forms easily degenerate into tyranny, oligarchy or licence (anarchy). A mixed government of the nobles and the people such as that of republican Rome is the ideal, but it is extremely rare, and unknown in fifteenth-century Italy. A good popular government is a higher form (*i.e.*, is better) than a good Prince, on the other hand a good Prince is better than a

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bad democracy, while between a bad Prince and a bad democracy there is little to choose, and anyway corrupt democracy gives rise to tyranny.[21]

But the hierarchy of governments here taken over from classical philosophy would be static. The whole of this is modified by a complex conception of the dynamics of history. When we get hold of this idea we begin to see how different elements of Machiavelli's outlook fit together.

The Introduction to Book II starts off with a critical defence of the author's humanism. Beginning: 'All men praise the past, and abuse the present, but not always with reason,' he qualifies his defence by postulating an up-and-down process in history: thus those who curse the present, even when they are born in the ascending era are deceived, but those who live in the declining have good cause.

> 'And pondering how these things came about, I consider the world to have been always of the same composition, and to have had so much good and so much bad; but this bad and this good to have varied from province to province . . . And where this greatness (*virtù*) was first gathered in Assyria, and then among the Medes, and in Persia, so eventually it passed to Italy and to Rome: and if since the Roman Empire there has been no lasting dominion established, nevertheless one sees greatness to have been scattered throughout many nations; as it was in the reign of the Franks, the reign of the Turks, that of the Soldan; and to-day among the peoples of Germany . . .'

Here follows one of the periodic tirades against the corruption of contemporary Italy, in contrast to the German world, of which Machiavelli had so idyllic an impression. This corruption is attributed primarily to the temporal struggles of the Popes, and secondly to the effeminacy of the Christian religion, setting a premium on humility and other-worldliness, where pagan religions prized worldly courage and *virtù*.[22]

Most of the classical history discussed in the three Books of the *Discourses* now concerns the apparently unending crises of the Roman republic in her struggle to preserve herself from 'corruption.' One of her mainstays is held to have been her religion, 'a thing altogether necessary in maintaining a

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civilization.'[23] From what follows it transpires that the religion here referred to is a state-cult based on convenient superstition and ceremonies[24]—and this is the only religion ever discussed, although we know as a fact that Machiavelli died a practising Catholic.

Rome relied for the preservation of her imperial glory on good laws, and on good religion, but in the last analysis on the inherent goodness of her citizens, their native *virtù*. We have already seen how this *virtù* leading her on to expansion and wealth bears with it the seeds of its own corruption, and how this works in with the cyclic, up-and-down idea in history.

But here again we have hardly come up against what seems a stable philosophic concept than it becomes necessary to modify it profoundly. For Machiavelli, as a potentially active politician, is a partisan in developments. He now finds himself on the underside of the wheel in the historic process, and he wants to climb up, feels there should be a way up, a short cut, but, realist that he is, he knows that his efforts are useless. This is the explanation both of those extraordinary bursts of idealism, such as the tirade against Cæsarism,[25] or the last chapter of the *Prince*, and also of the profound pessimism and despair, which appear from time to time in his work. Let us continue to unwind the thread of his history.

Inevitably Rome will end in corruption. Machiavelli recognizes this on his general showing, and yet in detail he is desperately unwilling to let it happen. In his search for precepts what he is really looking for are absolute rules for political conduct, he has a fumbling belief that if he could only muster a sufficient number he would be able to short-circuit the whole contemporary process, bringing Italy back into the path of ancient *virtù*. Towards the end of the *Discourses* he begins to feel that this quest is endless and therefore hopeless, it is impossible to foresee and forestall all accidents—the final chapter opens with what is really an admission of this defeat. Yet when the inevitable does happen he is furious and indignant. Historically, of course, Cæsar marked both the end of Roman liberties and therefore the beginning of her decline, and the height of her glory. But Machiavelli will only recognize the former:

> 'Let no man be deceived by the renown of Cæsar, above all, on hearing him celebrated by writers; for those that praise him are corrupted by his fortune.'[25]

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He then goes on to describe the afflictions of Italy under the Emperors, this develops into another tirade against contemporary corruption—and the blame for all this is laid on Cæsar! What Machiavelli would have had Cæsar do was to arrest the cyclic development:

> 'And truly a prince in search of worldly glory might wish to possess a corrupt city, not to destroy her entirely as did Cæsar, but to reform her as did Romulus.'[25]

When we contrast this with the several passages relevant to the inevitability of decay, it is evident that this was wishful thinking. And the Cæsar who should act as Romulus was, of course, the same ideal personage as that at the back of the author's mind in composing the *Prince*.

The decadence of Rome, then, after Cæsar has become a fact. And the corruption of Italy, and to an only slighter extent of France and Spain—where open corruption is staved off by good ordinances[26]—is attributed to her downfall. The only places where the ancient *virtù* is now found are among the Germans,[26] the Swiss,[27] the English,[28] and possibly the Turks. The logical outcome for Machiavelli of such a view would have been to set patriotism aside and align himself with the redeeming conqueror, but this obviously was impossible, and his life itself was a valiant struggle against such an outcome. His dilemma becomes clear if we compare him with Spengler, whose view of history is evidently similar, but with the important difference that Spengler's admiration of the earth-and-blood virtues of tribal Germany did not clash with his natural patriotism, so that there was no obstacle to his becoming the official prophet of Nazi Germany. Machiavelli was in the position of a modern Frenchman such as Céline: emotions and intelligence opposed, so that a purely intellectual solution was impossible—and modern anti-semiticism had not been invented.

For Machiavelli insists in a number of passages on the one-way character of the process of corruption,[29] and adds:

> 'One may make this observation that where the material is uncorrupted, tumults and other scandals are not prejudicial: where it is corrupted, good laws are of no avail, unless they are effected by one who with extreme vigour enforces their

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observance, so that the material is made good. *Whether this has ever been the case I know not, nor whether it is possible that it should come about.*' (italics mine).

But if Rome had such unremitting crises in maintaining her liberty and succumbed in the end in spite of her early freedom and many prudent counsellors, what wonder if in other cities less fortunate in their origins 'such difficulties arise that they can never be reformed?'[30] And more specifically what hope is there for Florence, born in servitude and corrupted throughout, before she even became her own mistress,

> 'and so has gone muddling on for two hundred years . . . without ever becoming such that she might really be called a republic?'[30]

Moreover, elsewhere Machiavelli places Florence and Venice, accustomed to a certain measure of liberty, in a category above Milan, Rome and Naples, who have no experience of any rule except tyranny, and 'it is as difficult and dangerous to wish to liberate a people wanting to live in slavery, as to wish to enslave a people wanting to live in liberty'[31]—so for Italy as a whole there could be slight hope of that liberation Machiavelli so ardently desired. It is with the painful acceptance of this reality that begins that melancholy and finally despairing quest to find a policy embodying the lesser evil.

In general, as his life and the bulk of the *Discourses* show, Machiavelli favoured republican government. This resulted from no loose theory of humanitarianism: it rested on a profound pessimism as regards the nature of man:

> 'It is necessary for him who wishes to ordain a republic . . . to presuppose all men to be wicked, and that they will use the malice of their being, wherever they have free occasion . . .'[32]

Certain passages in the *Discourses*[33] seem at first sight to imply a Shakespearean contempt of the 'mob,' which has allowed some modern critics, such as Mussolini, to associate Machiavelli with the more violently anti-democratic opinions, but how superficial this view is can be shown in a number of places, where the author clarifies his attitude to popular rule. In his view all men are

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supremely prone to err, and this generalization embraces not simply those who are governed, but also, and above all, those who govern, unless they are held fast in the road of *virtù* by good ordinances, as the kings of contemporary France or Spain, or by the primitive *virtù* of the community, as in early Rome or contemporary Germany. Taking as his text Livy's statement, affirmed by 'all the other historians': 'Nothing to be more inconstant than the multitude.' Machiavelli proceeds to uphold the contrary, and this launches into a panegyric in favour of the natural wisdom of a people against the natural wisdom of a prince, in which the actions of both are compared over a number of points and everywhere sounder judgment comes from the people:

> 'In the elections of magistrates they make far more judicious choice than princes; nor is it ever possible to persuade them to advance a man of corrupt and infamous character: which yet is an easy and common thing with princes . . .
>
> 'And not without reason is the saying "Vox populi vox Dei": for it is seen that the body of the people do marvellous things in their prognostications; so that it seems as if by hidden virtue they foresee their own evil and good.'[34]

This last passage must not be forgotten in computing the change in political thought from Machiavelli to Montesquieu and Rousseau.

But Machiavelli did not advocate popular government without sarcastically criticizing its inefficiency in crisis,[35] and insisting on the necessity of dictatorial powers at times.[36] In Rome such powers were given for short periods and with elaborate safeguards against their abuse, and Venice, 'the most excellent of modern republics,'[36] had a similar provision for empowering a small body of citizens to act without general consultation. In a weak republic such measures may lead to tyranny, but in any case a crisis is likely to produce either tyranny, or ruin: in Rome tyranny rose under the name of dictatorship, but not because of it—'for it is forces that easily acquire names, not names forces.'[36]

But if ever a country, a whole civilization, was in a state of crisis, surely Italy was so at the end of the Renaissance. And here we are led on to consider the real meaning of the *Prince*.

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VI.

The main features of the *Prince* should have emerged from the argument of the foregoing sections. I think it is possible in a critical reading of the *Discourses* to gather all that Machiavelli has to give in the way of political wisdom. I have mentioned the fundamental interest in the mechanism of government, and how this sometimes leads to discussing both the republican and autocratic viewpoint on an identical problem. The body of the *Prince* consists in a selection of the relevant material solely from the latter point of view, and in the ordering of this in the form of a treatise, ' useful to him who understands it.'[37] As a treatise, it gains over the discursive commentary in the precision and strength of its texture, and, embodying already the athletic vigour of Machiavelli's reasoning, its prose style is understandably held by Italian critics for one of the peak-points in their literature.

Remains the so-called enigma of the *Prince*. We need hardly consider the old-fashioned cry of horror concerning the ' monstrous ' methods advocated by Machiavelli. We who have been brought up in the politics of the post-war period will find nothing odd in these: Machiavelli would certainly have applauded the British government's policy of promising Palestine (1) to the Arabs, (2) to the Jews, (3) to British imperial interests, and keeping none of these promises, or only those parts of them which remained profitable, when the circumstances that made the original promises worth while had disappeared. Similarly, Machiavelli would have agreed with the use made of religion by the ' Patriots ' in Spain, although he would have vigorously criticized their employment of mercenaries and foreign troops. And if anyone assert the sincerity of all these dealings, surely Freud's contribution to modern thought has made the boundary line between sincerity and insincerity a very shadowy one indeed, depending in the last analysis on the individual's capacity for self-deception—here be it readily admitted that English politicians are a long way in advance of the Italians whether of the Renaissance or of to-day. So that the means advocated by Machiavelli towards a given end are as relevant now as ever. Moralistic criticism rests, of course, on the belief that there is no distinction between private and state morality.

I have indicated how the whole trend of Machiavelli's approach to history, as embodied in the *Discourses*, leads finally to the

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expedient of the glorious Prince in contemporary Italy, who should come ' not to ruin the state, as did Cæsar, but to re-create it, as did Romulus.' Once national redemption was achieved, Machiavelli presumably hoped it would give way to some form of mixed government, either by the expulsion of the rulers, as in ancient Rome, or by a more gradual evolution, such as that envisaged in the *Discourse over the Reform of Florence* (1519), in which he put forward an elaborate plan for the Medici to maintain absolute power in the city during their lifetime, while providing for its reversion to a republic on their death.[38]. In life Machiavelli was, in spite of all his realism, a fervent idealist to the end, and I have tried to show what element there is of wishful thinking in certain parts of his work. It is impossible to avoid making this charge—for all its moving eloquence—against the last chapter of the *Prince*. There is absolutely nothing in what we know of either of the young Medici to whom it was alternately addressed to indicate any likelihood of their succeeding, where Cæsar Borgia had failed ; and Machiavelli who knew so well how to size up the character and political wisdom of men from the nature of their actions, could not have been unaware of this. The dedication and concluding address of the *Prince* was far more an expression of the author's private idealism than of any external reality in Renaissance Italy.

NOTES.

[1]*Discourses* Book I, Chapter 12. [2]*Lettere familiare* (Ed. Alvisi, Firenze, 1883) Letter CXXXVII (Quoted in full by Morley). [3]See *Discourses* III, 30. [4]See *Discourses* I, 10. [5]*Prince* VII. [6]*Prince* XXV. [15]*Discourses* III, 30. [16]*Discourses* II, 27. [17]*Discourses* I 40, *Cf.* also I, 30. [18]*Discourses* III, 40. [19]*Discourses* I, 26. [20]See *Discourses* III, 22. [21]See *Discourses* I, 2, and immediately following chapters ; but the idea recurs throughout. [22]*Discourses* II, 2. [23]*Discourses* I, 11. [24]See *Discourses* I, 12. [25]*Discourses* I, 10. [26]*Discourses* I, 55 ; I, 58. [27]See *Discourses* I, 12. [28]See *Discourses* I, 21. [29]Notably, *Discourses* I, 17. [30]*Discourses* I. 49. [31]*Discourses* III, 8. [32]*Discourses* I, 3. [33]Notably I, 53. [34]*Discourses* I, 58. [35]*Discourses* II, 33. [36]*Discourses* I, 34. [37]*Prince* Chapter XV. [38]See also *Discourses* I, 9 and I, 2.

GRATTAN FREYER.

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CLASSICS AND EDUCATION

A NOTE

SOME years ago there was given out in these pages a challenge to describe the place that the study of Latin and Greek might profitably occupy in a revised education. Since that challenge has not been taken up by competent hands it may not be out of place to sketch some of the features which might figure in an effective answer, and at the same time to indicate why such an answer is at the present moment unlikely to be made.

The defence which has been put up for the Classics in the past was drafted to resist the encroachment of ' Modern ' studies, and for such purposes it was reasonably adequate. A liberal education involved the cultivation of the humane values, and the Humanities were their repository. Now the situation is changed. For if the main arguments of *Why Universities ?* (see *Scrutiny*, Vol. III, No. 2) are accepted, the ground is cut from under the defenders' feet. The claims of English (as defined in the article mentioned) as the humane study *par excellence* are much stronger than ever before. (There is an able page or two on this in George Sampson's *English for the English*). For Latin and Greek literature can never take such an intimate place in the life and thought of our age as was possible as late as the eighteenth century.

Though any claim for the Classics can only be for a subordinate rôle in a general education, it will rest naturally on the literature of the two languages. The language as such cannot be seriously defended. The writing of Latin and Greek verse and prose which occupies so large a part in school curricula to-day does not do anything which could not be done better by other methods. As ' discipline ' or as giving insight into the structure and intricacies of the English language it cannot compare even with translation into Basic as expounded by Dr. Richards. Indeed a case can be made out against the practice of writing verse in that it inhibits

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the appreciation of (say) Shakespeare or any characteristic English poetry which goes against the classical canons.[1]

The consequences of abandoning (in large measure) this side of current teaching are extensive. In the first place it involves a lowering of the standard of proficiency in the mastery of the languages. But this is only to recognize that the study of the Classics as a specialized subject must be distinguished from the cultivation of those languages as part of a general education. A similar distinction applies to all the subjects now generally taught. Radical as the reform would be, it is no more drastic than would be the reform of teaching in the natural sciences to fit them into a scheme of general education. In the second place greater reliance would have to be placed on translation. For if the literature is to be put in the place now given to the language much more ground

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[1]An interesting confirmation of this case comes to hand in the account of the Eton education by Cyril Connolly (*Enemies of Promise*, 'The Background of the Lilies,' Ch. xxii). 'Another field for the Pre-Raphaelite influence was in translating. Homer and Virgil were the pillars of an Eton education . . . we read them with the help of two official cribs, Butcher and Lang for Homer, Mackail for Virgil. Lang believed that Homer must be translated into the nearest English equivalent, which was an Anglo-Saxon prose reminiscent of the Sagas . . . and the Mediterranean clarity of the *Odyssey* was blurred, by a Wardour Street Nordic fog . . . Mackail, who had married William Morris's daughter, gave to his Virgil an eightyish air . . . To put it another way, a sensitive Etonian with a knowledge of Homer and Virgil through these translations, and a good ear, would be unable to detect in poems like *Tithonus*, *Ulysses*, or the *Lotus Eaters* any note foreign to the work of Homer and Virgil . . . Another effect was to associate English literature with Latin verses. We came to think of poetry in terms of tags and useful epithets, and to think of the best poetry as being in the form of the sonnet or sixteen-line lyric . . . No one who did his verses well wrote poetry afterwards. There would be one slim Eton-blue volume, with a few translations and a couple of epigrams, then silence. For the culture of the lilies, rooted in the past, divorced from reality, and dependent on a foreign tongue, was by nature sterile . . . We were not taught literature.'

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must be covered than could be gone over (in school, at any rate) in laborious construing as it is at present conducted.

But even more than the literature (which at the moment offers serious difficulties to be discussed later on in this note) it is the two civilizations which offer the most profitable study. Some hints of the value of a study in broad outlines of Greek civilization as a ' norm,' and as a method of introducing the basic questions, the main positions from which a criticism of our own civilization can begin, are thrown out by Dr. Meiklejohn in his account of the remarkable experiment in liberal education he undertook at Winsconsin (see *Scrutiny*, Vol. I, No. 3). But useful as this work was, it was only a beginning. His method requires greater refinement and precision. In order to present coherently the elements of Greek or Roman civilization, a sound conception is needed of the quality of the literature which emerged from it and which gave it its character, as well as of the relation of this literature to the general conditions of living. Great progress has been made in describing the social, economic, political and philosophic aspects of these civilizations, but this central point has not yet been satisfactorily treated.

A simple example taken from Dr. Meiklejohn's book will indicate the general difficulty facing any attempts of this kind. He recommended his pupils to compare *Mourning becomes Electra* with the *Oresteia*. In principle this was sound. For our approach to the values of the past must be from the present. But the implied estimation of both works will hardly meet with approval. And all the textbooks and critical appreciations of Classical literature current in schools (and in universities for that matter) are open to the same objection. They are based on critical values which are not held by those competent to judge. The classic example is the translation of Euripides by Gilbert Murray. What Mr. Eliot has to say in his celebrated essay applies generally to the whole field of ' interpretation.'

The reasons for this generally admitted weakness are not far to seek. Mere scholarship does not provide the apparatus necessary for the cultivation of literary criticism. Adequate standards can only be derived from the present. Actually the strict business of evaluation is rarely performed, and then only perfunctorily. The general formula is nine-tenths biography, summary and paraphrase

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of the works, and one-tenth of technical criticism. Exceptions to this description are generally of the over-personal impressionist school. Much, it is true, has been done to explain the principles the ancients themselves employed in judging their literature ; but this, though helpful, does not supersede the need to judge from contemporary standards.

No very helpful result, then, would emerge from a study of ancient literature with the aid of current textbooks and translations, as those who have done Adult Education work in this field will testify. A new approach is required, and until it is made the study will continue to produce an attitude on the whole hostile to contemporary literature. On the other hand the situation is not unfavourable. For the present age though far from being Periclean or Augustan is in much greater sympathy with the outlook of the ancient world than was the case at the end of the nineteenth century. Moreover the advances made in criticism and above all the work of Mr. Eliot as critic and poet have made possible the assimilation of much more of the classical world than was possible before.

But what is most needed is the appearance of translators who will render in the modern idiom the poetry of the past. Too much stress has been laid on the ' timeless ' quality of the classics. They can only be of quickening service in so far as they can appear modern. Unfortunately we cannot expect that as in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries poets will turn to translation as a way of expressing their modernity, in spite of the interesting work of Eliot and Pound. On the other hand the current verse technique as shown by these two poets is sufficiently flexible to undertake this task.

Such very briefly is the situation to-day. If this description is broadly accurate, nothing very much can be done except on the margins to turn Classical teaching to profit. And once again we may reflect that no other subject in the average public or secondary school is in better case. The teacher can here and there give a hint, but until a better critical approach is available the amount of time and money spent on the teaching of the Classics will remain largely unjustified.

H. A. MASON.

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MARLOWE'S 'DR. FAUSTUS'

THE final scene in *Dr. Faustus* is more often than not treated as irrelevant to the play. In it, says one critic, ' Marlowe committed apostasy ' ; that is, he reversed completely the purposes and principles that had hitherto governed his writing. And as these purposes and principles are approved, one of two conclusions follows: either that the final scene is the product of a Marlowe in decline ; or that he wrote it, at the best, as an exercise ; at the worst as a joke, with his tongue in his cheek. There is another critic who says: ' The alternative of a happy solution lies close at hand. It is only a lingering taste for the lurid and the horrible, ingrained in this sort of melodrama, that sends Faustus shrieking to hell.'

To both it would seem possible to reply that no scene of such excellence—and the excellence, so far as I know, is not denied—could issue from anyone who was not both capable of and actually exerting his powers to the utmost. But this perhaps assumes as premiss a belief about life and literature which, though acknowledged outside *Scrutiny*, is not generally used as such. Therefore it is advisable to fall back on a reply that can be verified from the words of the text ; and to claim that, so far from being disconnected from its predecessors, the final scene refers to them continually and is continually referred to by them.

The man who is ' sent shrieking to hell ' is one who previously had vaunted:

> Thinkst thou that Faustus is so fond, to imagine
> That after this life there is any paine?
> Tush, these are trifles and meere olde wives tales.

Whereas his ambition had been to

> . . . make man to live eternally,
> Or being dead, raise them to life againe,

he is, in the last scene, reduced to lament that he cannot die:

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Or, why is this immortall that thou hast?
Ah *Pythagoras metemsucosis*, were that true.
This soule should flie from me, and I be changde
Unto some brutish beast: al beasts are happy,
For when they die,
Their soules are soone dissolved in elements,
But mine must live . . .

He finds it impossible to be rid of his soul:

Why wert thou not a creature wanting soule?

whereas before he had thought nothing easier than to throw it away:

Had I as many soules as there be starres,
Ide give them all for *Mephastophilis*.

Or again:

. . . Heres the scrowle
Wherein thou hast given thy soule to *Lucifer*.
—I, and body too, but what of that?

And so on: it would be possible, in illustration of this point, to transcribe whole pages of dialogue. But it is perhaps superfluous to do so, and relevant quotation will in any case be necessary later.

These references backward, once recognized, improve, I think, the last scene, however impressive in itself; and that the earlier scenes are improved by it, goes without saying. By them the play is knit into a firm if simple structure, of which it is still possible, in spite of a mutilated text, to trace the main outlines. I shall at least attempt to do so in this paper.

But first it will be necessary to discuss other and, I am afraid, more general topics. For the play makes extensive use of a system of ideas which is no longer widely familiar; and it cannot be recalled by the brief hints which, as sufficient in his time, are all that Marlowe provides.

Pared of its comic scenes, and of the not very serious ones first published in 1616, the play cannot, according to a common opinion, be interpreted wholly realistically. It is not merely a photograph, showing beings who exist side by side to influence one another. A large measure of the action takes place not so much between beings as within a single one of them, Faustus

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himself ; of whom the Good and the Evil Angel, for example, are parts. And so, I would add, are the Old Man, Helen, Mephistophilis, even Lucifer ; in a certain sense, which I shall endeavour to explain below, they are parts of Faustus. The play in other words is an allegory.

Yet obviously the Good and the Evil Angel, Helen and the rest are not merely parts of Faustus. The two angels are emissaries of powers, or representatives of orders, independent of himself ; while Helen, though a shade, is more than a figment of his imagination. Hence it would appear that allegory does not altogether exclude realism ; or perhaps better, that when as excellent as Marlowe's it inevitably employs realism as an instrument. For if compared with other types, its excellence will be found to be precisely this: that it is neither a puzzle, in which things are given an interest by being called other than their proper names ; nor is it a scientific analysis, in which various aspects of a thing are isolated for their readier comprehension. I would say rather that it is a synthesis, rendering comprehension not so much more ready as more full.

Marlowe chooses certain characters so as to be capable of at least a double function: they are significant as symbols, in virtue of what they symbolize ; but significant also as themselves, in virtue of what they are. And they are not significant now as the one thing, now as the other, by a sort of alternation ; but continuously and simultaneously, as both. That they can be so, it is at least plausible to assume, is due to an affinity, or to a partial or potential identity, between what they are and what they symbolize. If the latter, establishment of the identity will be the synthesis effected. In a sense two things are distinct, and this must be acknowledged ; but in a sense also they are one, and unless this is acknowledged, they cannot fully be understood, even in the sense in which they are distinct.

The Good Angel, for example, is the representative of an order or goodness, independent of Faustus in that it is not affected whether he is loyal to it or not. He can no more increase or diminish its perfection, than he can create or destroy it. But at the same time the Angel symbolizes a part of Faustus ; and may do both because, though the converse is true, Faustus is by no means independent of the order. Only by loyalty can he attain his own perfection and therefore peace ; if disloyal, he is tormented by regret for the

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perfection he has sacrificed. And so, whatever the goodness or badness of his life, the order is vindicated in him: he is evidence of it, a part of it—and to be identified with it, in this sense. But there is also a sense in which he must be kept distinct ; for whereas the order's perfection is compatible with any life he may choose, only one, a good one, is compatible with his own.

All this is what the Good Angel, by multiplicity of function, is able to signify. As much Faustus as, say, reason or the power of thought, he supplies the latter, when he is loyal, with an occasion for rejoicing ; if otherwise, self-reproach is as inevitable as thought. But at the same time he is none the less an angel, and as such not subject to Faustus's control: he cannot for example, as thought might, be silenced from time to time and ultimately be forgotten. So that joy and sorrow are not merely, or rather in this sense not at all, selected by Faustus for himself, according to what instinct of propriety he may possess: he suffers a sorrow which is inflicted, he receives a joy which is bestowed. Yet again, all that he receives or suffers in this way, since it comes from the Good Angel or from what the Angel represents, is in conformity with and so to speak demanded by his nature: of which the Angel continues as much as ever a part. And thus a synthesis is suggested by the allegory: that Faustus's life, though single and indivisible, is both his own and not his own. On the one hand he alone can lead it, and he cannot do other than lead it, to his profit or to his loss ; on the other hand however led, it is the intimate concern of, as it is intimately concerned with, what is other than himself.

In much the same way Helen is the lust of the eyes and of the flesh, both as these are objects in an external world, other than Faustus ; and as they are his own passions, leading him to seek within those objects a happiness. As both, she is able to signify that, by his nature, he is bound to the objects in one relation or another ; inevitably they are part of his living. But the consequences of any relation are determined by the objects as distinct from his nature ; and so there is a sense in which he and Helen must be distinct. While the Good Angel, at least as substantial as he, could ensure a lasting happiness ; that proffered by Helen can be no more than momentary, for she is hardly substantial—she is a shade.

An allegorical interpretation of this kind should not perhaps

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be limited to space but extended also to time. I mean that, just as the spatial distinction between Faustus and the Good Angel is accepted as to some extent, though not wholly, a device (for while distinct, the two in another sense are one): so also should the temporal separation between his death and his signing of the contract. The one event follows the other after a period of twenty-four years, and the period is significant as itself ; but also, I think, it is symbolical of the moment of signing. Or rather, of the moment at which Faustus determines to sign: for at that moment, and without delay, he plunges to spiritual death. He kills his soul, which does not need twenty-four years to weaken or to wither. But as death, whether spiritual or physical, does not annihilate a soul, the consequences of the determination to sign, though arriving within are not confined to a moment. Without the intervention of grace they will stretch through eternity, and can therefore be represented, if at all, only under some figure of time. And this is the purpose of the twenty-four years: which as has been said are significant as themselves—but are so only that a single moment may be the more adequately symbolized. To accomplish his purpose Marlowe might be said to write a play of which the hero is both alive and not alive. He appears to be working out as best he can his salvation, and in a sense he is doing so ; but there is another sense in which he is working out neither his salvation nor his damnation. He is damned already.

Recognition of both these allegories, and that they are of complicated rather than simple type, is I think necessary to remove obstacles to the reader's enjoyment. For if it is not made, various absurdities arise which are incompatible with the reputation the play is felt to deserve. If for example the two Angels are accepted merely in their symbolical sense, as parts of Faustus, they are nothing but ideals or aspirations opposing one another within his brain. To one or other he must attach himself, but it is not yet obvious which ; meanwhile he must behave impartially to both, since both are his offspring. And the two must argue for his allegiance ; with the result that, as Mr. Santayana says, ' the Good Angel . . . seems to have the worst of it.' But if this is so, the last scene is not only irrelevant, it is contradictory of all that precedes ; and no criticism of it could be too severe. A happy ending was demanded, to justify the sound

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decision of an umpire ; and this Marlowe, through malice or perversity, refuses to provide.

If on the other hand the Angels are accepted as at the same time angels ; as representatives, that is, of orders established in a universe outside Faustus: it cannot appear doubtful even for a moment which of them should be followed. For Faustus is submitted to the universe as its creature, though a free one ; and it is precisely to express this submission that he is symbolized by the Angels at all. Of these it is assumed—or rather, it would be assumed by an Elizabethan audience—that good dominates evil, so to speak absorbs it, and subordinates the ends of evil to ends of its own. Therefore there is no hope of Faustus cutting loose from what the Good Angel represents: by refusing to co-operate with it however insistently he can only prepare for himself a future punishment—and this is a form of involuntary co-operation.

On other grounds it might be said that argument is not even possible. For Faustus, no more than another man, could be argued into a choice of evil as evil. The sole problem, given the Angels as an objective evil and an objective good, is not which of them ought to be followed ; but which of them will be followed in fact, and what the consequences will be.

These are to some extent displayed by behaviour on the part of the Angels which, if at first sight it might be taken for argument, is in reality very different. It will be remembered that the consequences, though they immediately supervene, are for their fuller comprehension spread over twenty-four years. Faustus is allowed to explore evil with all patience and all diligence ; so that, if it does not bring happiness, the fact after such an experiment shall be more convincing ; if on the other hand it brings misery, the contrast with what appeared happiness for a time shall be the sharper. During the whole of the twenty-four years each of the Angels continues in his double role: as part of Faustus, expressing his preoccupations ; and as external agent, either encouraging those preoccupations or seeking to end them. As both, the Evil Angel and his associates—for he is not considered profitably, apart from the devils—are inevitably more prominent in the earlier scenes. Evil is a new toy, on which Faustus cannot cease to ponder ; nor can he resist any invitations to evil that he may receive. If it is imposible the Good Angel should be silenced, he may at any rate

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be reduced to single lines and general warnings, such as are easily ignored.

> Sweet Faustus, thinke of heaven and heavenly things.
> —No Faustus, thinke of honor and of wealth.
> —Of wealth,
> Why the signiory of Embden shall be mine.

This is not an argument, by which Faustus or anyone is to be persuaded that evil is better than good ; but a mere statement or illustration of the fact that, once Faustus has chosen evil, he has neither eyes nor ears save for the immediate advantages of having done so.

The gifts of the devil however neither satisfy nor last. Power and wealth, all that Faustus hitherto has obtained, are not in themselves either bad or good ; and so long as they are contemplated merely, he need not be disturbed. But once the attempt is made to use them, disillusion begins. In his inexperience he thinks that, having sold himself into hell, he will be allowed to retain a portion of his integrity: to seize the opportunity, for example, of new found wealth, to set up an orderly household. Therefore he asks for a wife, and one is brought. But she proves stuffed with fireworks and goes up in smoke:

> A plague on her for a hote whore,

he cries, and must henceforth content himself with the ' fairest curtezans.'

Thus his fleshly desires are satisfied, *tant bien que mal* ; but the result is that his spiritual desires, as they are the more isolated, become the more insistent. The devil, having already supplied a book of spells, of planets and of herbs, is summoned to dispute of ' divine astrologie.' The joy of learning, however, is no more permissible to Faustus than that of domestic bliss ; for if pursued in due order and in the proper temper, it can lead to one thing only—the knowledge, the love and ultimately the vision of God. And all these, along with goodness, he has renounced. By a process of reasoning which resembles, and is probably intended to recall, the scholastic argument *a contingentia*, Faustus ascends from a consideration of the planets to that of the moving Intelligences ; and thence to the supreme Intelligence which is the origin and mover of all.

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Tell me who made the world?

he asks, but can receive no answer. The whole economy of hell is disturbed; Lucifer appears with his 'companion prince,' Beelzebub, and 'looking terrible' imposes silence. But as Faustus's mind cannot be left completely vacant there is offered him, as a substitute for the vision of God, that of the seven deadly sins. He watches with detachment, but not without interest; for if he is moved to no protest against their loathsomeness, he exchanges quips with one or two. And at the end he exclaims:

> O this feedes my soule.
> —Tut Faustus, in hel is al manner of delight.
> —O might I see hel, and return againe, how happy were I then?

At this point he has fallen victim to a vice familiar to the Fathers and to the schoolmen, but rarely mentioned as such today: that of curiosity. 'Whereas the voluptuous man,' says Augustine, 'seeks after what is beautiful, melodious, sweet or smooth, the curious man seeks after the very opposites of these; not however that he may be vexed by them, but merely out of the lust to experience and to know.' This is Faustus's case: the seven sins do not move him as they would an ordinary man, and as a man should be moved. He has begun to collect sensations without judgment and without order, not as an aid to right living but merely for their own sake. And the further descent from curiosity of the senses to that of the intellect is easy. 'No longer'—to quote Augustine once again—'is nature explored only so far as is necessary to see the eternal through the temporal,' but ransacked in all its corners for the quicker compassing of 'false and earthly happiness, empty and worldly distinction.' With the magazines of science which Faustus now accumulates, he is out of the danger of knowing God; he is on the other hand the better qualified to tease Popes, oblige Duchesses and entertain Emperors.

In the pasage from which the last quotation comes, and also elsewhere, Augustine connects curiosity with the conjuring and worship of devils. It is not only this which leads to the suspicion that he, or at least his doctrines, had a strong influence on *Dr. Faustus* (a direct influence I mean, and not only by way of the *Faustbook*;

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for as will be apparent now or later, I think Marlowe abandons the theology of the *Faustbook* for one which is more humane, as it is more traditional). That the unbounded appetite for experience or for learning was a discovery of the Renaissance is a superstition common amongst commentators: it had however been known long before, and in particular to Augustine—who was seduced into Manichaeism by the promise he would no longer need to believe, but should know ; and who had, in his own magnificent image, the ' sun and moon served up to him in a dish,' but found the food unsustaining. What was new in the Renaissance was the neglect of the boundaries within which, as had been taught by considered experience, this appetite must be guided if it were not to lead to disaster. And thus if any step was taken by Marlowe's contemporaries it was backward (in this matter at least) rather than forward. Marlowe also may have taken the step in *Tamburlaine,* and it seems probable that he did ; but if so, he was seeking in *Dr. Faustus* to recover lost ground as speedily as possible. For evidence in support of this it is necessary to consider only the verse of the two plays, especially of the death scenes. They cannot be held—or rather they should not be held, for it seems they often are—to be mere repetitions one of another *in dispari materia*: the latter is immeasurably more mature. It is indeed fully mature, while the other, like the Renaissance in so many aspects, is no more than adolescent.

But this is a digression. The eternal, which we left Faustus neglecting, in the end cannot but avenge itself ; for its only rival must sooner or later vanish, leaving an open field. By the choice of evil Faustus has forfeited not only spiritual but physical integrity, such as in the allegory is destroyed by the passage of time. An Old Man ('base and crooked age,' that is *Senectus*) reminds him of this. Unable to deny it he is as never before seized with fury against an agent of good, and asks for him to be tormented. But in vain: for Mephistophilis is powerless against one who, unlike Faustus, has laid fast hold on the eternal:

> My faith, vile hel, shall triumph over thee.
> Ambitious fiends, see how the heavens smiles
> At your repulse, and laughs your state to scorn.
> Hence hel, for hence I flie unto my God.

Faustus on the contrary has nowhere to fly but to what remains

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of his youth ; the more fleeting as youth itself is a shadow. Helen plays *Juventus,* and it is of her that he is driven to beg

> Sweet *Helen,* make me immortal with a kiss ;

meaning thereby not that he himself—for to his misfortune, he is immortal already—but that what remains of youth, the present moment, shall not pass away. By the nature of things this is impossible ; the twenty-four years draw to a close and before the allegory ends the last gift of the Evil Angel—for which in turn all others have been sacrificed, and all that might have come from any other source—has already crumbled in his hands.

As the attractiveness of evil gradually declines, that of good grows in inverse proportion. For it is eternal and therefore remains to draw Faustus's eyes when, the mists of evil dissolved, they are left hungry for an object. Thus the more prominent role which in the earlier scenes fell to the Evil Angel, is in the later assumed by the Good Angel and his associates: the Old Man and Faustus's own conscience. The latter, who once confined the Good Angel to the briefest of utterances, in the penultimate scene is himself forced to exclaim at length:

> What wonders I have done al *Germany* can witness, yea all the world, for which *Faustus* hath lost both *Germany,* and the world, yea heaven it selfe, heaven the seate of God the throne of the blessed, the kingdome of joy, and must remain in hel for ever, hel, ah, hel for ever, sweete friends, what shall become of Faustus, being in hel for ever? . . . Ah Gentlemen! I gave my soule for my cunning.—God forbid.—God forbade it indeed, but Faustus hath done it: for vaine pleasure of 24. yeares hath Faustus lost eternall joy and felicitie.

The Good Angel 'gets the best of it' after all ; for he or his allies speak last and, as this is not an argument but a history, he who speaks last wins.

Having forfeited the good, Faustus's knowledge of it is of course in no sense full ; still, there is a degree of which he cannot be rid, sufficient to feed a regret which is his chief torment in eternity. According to Mephistophilis it is also the torment of the

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devils, who nevertheless do not lack diligence in or affection to evil. The two therefore—the regret and the affection—are not incompatible ; and this notion may perhaps be of use in removing what appears another misunderstanding of Mr. Santayana's.

'The excellent Faustus,' he complains, '. . . is browbeaten by the devil and forbidden to repent when he has actually repented.' But if so the play, as containing a contradiction, could hardly be taken seriously ; or at least, no more seriously than it its source the *Faustbook*, to which Mr. Santayana's words more certainly apply. Even admirers of the latter would perhaps admit this to be a mistake ; and there is I think in the play, over and above what there is in the book, something which Mr. Santayana overlooks—once again, the allegories. In so far as Marlowe's Faustus is damned, and as he is living on earth only to exemplify in part the sufferings of the damned, he has identified himself with the devils as far as he possibly can. And he is kept to hell, or to association with evil, exactly as they are: not by browbeatings and prohibitions, but by his own free will. For they have an affection to evil ; they have so formed or deformed themselves that they can desire only what secures them misery. Had they for example the opportunity to escape from hell they would not take it ; though it is a place only of suffering, such as comes from the loss of heaven. Rather than not have heaven in hell where alone it is impossible, they would not have it at all. A state of violent discord and disorder similar to this exists in Faustus's soul. And this is what passages like the following, which Mr. Santayana has in mind, are intented to convey allegorically. It is not only Lucifer who drags a reluctant Faustus from thoughts of heaven:

> Ah Christ my Saviour,
> Seeke to save distressed Faustus soule.
> —Christ cannot save thy soule, for he is just,
> Thers none but I have intrest in the same.
> —O who art thou that lookst so terrible?
> —I am Lucifer . . .
> We come to tell thee thou dost injure us.
> Thou talkst of Christ, contrary to thy promise:
> Thou shouldst not thinke of God, thinke of the devil,
> And of his dame too.

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Faustus also drags himself. For Lucifer, like the Good Angel, is here playing a double role: he is devil, but also he is part of Faustus, who is thus agent as well as victim in his own torment. And an interpretation of this kind should always I think be made whenever, at first sight, it appears that Faustus's moral freedom is being infringed. It is not, for example, only Lucifer and Beelzebub who forbid him to continue the study of 'astrologie'; it is his own evil will, which has already determined not to embrace the truths to which astrology is leading. To do this he has to exert violence on himself, not inaptly represented by a disturbance in hell; principally he has to sink deeper into hell, or to reveal a greater depth of evil in himself than has yet appeared. And as has been seen, this is what he does.

It is of course impossible to get a clear conception of his state; eternity is full of contradictions, so is evil, and little perspicuity is to be expected of a notion that combines the two. But Marlowe comes perhaps as near to a forcible expression of it as possible. Because of its complication his allegory is so to speak more than an allegory: one picture is not substituted for and therefore weakened by another; two pictures are retained, to give each other strength. Faustus suffers not merely *as though* he were struggling with an outside enemy, he has such an enemy; not merely *as though* he were torn within, he is so torn. And against Lucifer he must struggle with the persistence called for against himself: against himself with the violence for which Lucifer calls. The whole of his strength seems to lie on both sides of the struggle and therefore he is indeed, as he says, torn as by devils. But he should also add that he had an affection to the devils which tears equally.

The temporal allegory is effective in a very similar way. We can conceive of pain or sorrow persisting at its acutest only in the hope that one day it will cease: otherwise it must either blunt itself, or wear out its possessor. As he is alive Faustus has hope, and therefore pain of this intensity:

> Ah Christ my Saviour,
> Seeke to save distressed Faustus soule.

But at the same time he has no hope, for he is dead:

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I am Lucifer . . .
Thou talkst of Christ contrary to thy promise,
. . . thinke of the devil.

This does not of course mean that he unites contradictories in himself, as life and death ; but that, since his life illustrates his death, he must be conceived as continuing after death to suffer the utmost that, in life, he has ever suffered. Yet the one condition, that of hope, has disappeared, which as far as our experience goes makes such suffering supportable.

It should perhaps be further noted that the allegories not only provide material and machinery for the body of the play, but shape it. It begins with a monologue, for example, and ends with one: as Faustus alone can commit the act for which he is to be punished, he enters alone to commit it so that responsibility shall be clear. He alone can endure the punishment, and is therefore left alone to meet it. But between these two points the stage is crowded with figures who, if they cannot commit may influence the act ; or if not influence, may be influenced by it: the more fully to exhibit its nature and its workings. Only towards the end the stage thins out, and Faustus is left alone with his Scholars. They are little more than conveniences, to allow him to soliloquize in public: the solitude which he dreads nevertheless pursuing him, and so to speak commanding him to itself out of society. Similarly with the allegory of time. In the body of the play scene succeeds scene, not indeed in any order, but in one which is more of psychological than chronological significance. They are like tableaux, illustrating the possibly simultaneous aspects of a man's state of soul, rather than events in his history. But towards the end references to time begin to multiply: Faustus must back to Wittenberg, he must nurse his complacency with a ' quiet sleep,' soon sleep will not suffice and he is driven to riot and debauch. In the final monologue a clock is on the stage, faster than ordinary clocks ; its second half-hour is shorter than its first ; and Faustus's imagery, now seeking to halt time, now yielding to it in despair, only succeeds in making it fly the faster:

The starres moove stil, time runs, the clocke wil strike,
The divel wil come, and Faustus must be damnd.

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The general effect is that he is rushing upon his doom. And very much the same effect, it will be suggested below, is given by the opening monologue: in which he rushes on the act from which the doom results. In both cases the intention would appear to be the same: to create the impression of asymptotic approaches to single points of time, both of supreme importance to the play. From the one, as the consequences of an act committed in it, the whole play issues; into the other, where the consequences are resumed, the whole play is absorbed. There is however more: according to one sense of the temporal allegory both points are the same, for the consequences follow immediately upon the act. And thus the play is not only symmetrical, it has the form of a closed circle; it ends where it begins; it leaves Faustus when and as it found him. It might be compared to a spring which rushes from the ground; spreads into a pool for awhile, to allow of inspection; then withdraws as rapidly into its source.

Little space has I am afraid been left for a topic of major importance: what is the nature of the sinful act which Faustus commits. But this cannot be neglected, as it is both the strongest bond between the last scene and its predecessors, and decisive for the character of the play. I will treat it as expeditiously as possible.

The sin is pride which, according to theologians, is the form and fount of all other sin. Moreover Faustus commits it formally, that is deliberately, without the shadow of an excuse or reason save his will to do so. That is, it is not one of the sins committed in actual life, where some excuse in however small a measure is always to be found. Rather it is an abstract from them all, sin it might be said in its essence. Taking this as its theme the play is to be called not only, as hitherto, an allegory; but a morality.

Possible excuses, did Faustus possess them, would be passion or ignorance. By one or the other, as they may take a man's actions out of his power, his moral responsibility may be diminished or totally abolished. But Faustus, in his first sixty-five lines shows himself without a trace of either. He does not mention lusts of the flesh; he is free from that of gold, for he dismisses it as 'external trash'; and from that of worldly honours, all of which, if he has desired them, he has enjoyed. And he enjoys them no longer; they are now a vanity to him, and he longs for something more.

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This might of course be taken as a sign that about him ambition of some kind or other still lurks. It is however of so undetermined a nature—to the reader it is described only by negatives, as not addressed to gold, not to forensic glory, and so on—that it is hardly to be considered a passion. Rather it is an impulse to activity in general, to life itself, and without it Faustus would cease to be recognizable in any way as a human being. Even in the monologue as it stands, it must I think be confessed that he is only just recognizable: for an impulse of this kind, which though urgent is not clearly or even dimly conscious of a goal, would seem mechanical rather than human. It is machines, not men that function without some idea of an end. And hence no doubt the mechanical qualities of the verse:

> Is to dispute well, Logickes chiefest end?
> Affoords this Art no greater myracle?
> Then read no more, thou hast attained that end:
> A greater subject fitteth *Faustus* wit . . .

and so on. It is direct, it is economical, above all it is not inappropriate to this part of the play. But it is the price which a morality has to pay for immediate and universal relevance, that in certain aspects it appears machine-like and gaunt; for detail must as far as possible be neglected.

As for ignorance, Faustus is past master in all the arts, from logic to jurisprudence, which are useful in earthly and human affairs. He has achieved astounding success; and decides, reviewing them one by one, that none of them has anything to give him any more. Therefore it is not among them that he will find a goal to which to direct his impulse to activity. The only goal left, it seems, is that of affairs not of this earth: the supernatural rather than the natural:

> When all is done, Divinitie is best.

Opening *'Jerome's* Bible' he finds, as his first lesson in the supernatural, *'Stipendium peccati mors est.'* There is, he learns, such a possibility as that man should sin, and sin humiliates man in death. He recoils from the lesson:

> The reward of sin is death: thats hard.

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As yet however he does not reject it ; and his exclamation, though irrelevant as it would be to any statement of fact, can be taken as an example of a sort of reluctance which is familiar. For a moment the acceptance of something is postponed which, it is well known, must be accepted sooner or later. But what Faustus goes on to read does more than state a possibility, it inflicts humiliation upon him: '*Si peccasse negamus, fallimur.*' As all men have sinned Faustus has sinned, and he is already involved in death. This he rejects outright, preferring his own idea of what a fact is or should be to what, if he will open his eyes, he can see that it is (or such, at any rate, was the assumption of Marlowe and his audience). Thus he commits the sin of pride: the play has begun and, in one sense of the temporal allegory, at the same time ended.

His conscience protesting immediately, he seeks to conciliate it with the following sophism.

> If we say we have no sinne,
> We deceive ourselves, and theres no truth in us.
> Why then belike
> We must sin, and so consequently die.

If it is true that he has sinned, he says to himself he was forced into it—it was his nature to sin, he could not help himself. And conscience being thus cleared, he has no need, in spite of the Bible's assertions, to be humble. And a further conclusion follows: that if any man has sinned, he too was forced into it ; if all men have done so, their nature is such as to have been designed for eternal destruction:

> I, we must die an everlasting death:
> What doctrine call you this, Che sera, sera . . . ?

He may call it what he wishes, and it is certainly a revolting doctrine. But, rather than divinity, it is one which he has evolved for himself, by denying the basis on which all divinity rests: that sin is of its essence voluntary. But he insists on identifying the two so that, to a none too clear-sighted conscience, the rejection of divinity shall seem not only plausible but inevitable.

He no longer feels the need to review the sciences so that he may discover in what direction to employ himself. External authority denied, conscience put to sleep, there is no direction

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which is forbidden, none which does not, at any rate at first glance, attract. Ceasing to profess the useful arts, he will become a magician and, in

> . . . a world of profit and delight,
> Of power, of honor, of omnipotence

he will be, not only King or Emperor, but a 'mighty god.' By now the verse has lost its mechanism, has begun to move with the easy enthusiasms of *Tamburlaine*: through the door of pride the passions have begun to invade Faustus, and he welcomes every one.

The rapidity of movement in this prologue, already referred to, may now perhaps be appreciated. Only nine lines are given to the crisis: four to the reading of the Bible preliminary to the act of pride, five to the apology which follows it; the act itself falling between the two groups, and being mentioned in no line. If this seems a dramatic defect, it should be reflected that, as has been said, Faustus's sin has not the shadow of an excuse. It is not the result of suasion but a pure act of the will (such as can be conceived only by abstraction) and the will turns to evil. As such the act cannot be analysed or understood: for only if it were excusable could we trace it to an origin, place ourselves at the point of view of doer, and see how—however much we deplored it—'he came to do what he did.' In so far as anything is evil, it cannot be explained by those who recognize it as such. Marlowe therefore can do no more than observe the act of pride, mark it as it occurs, then proceed to what is his chief interest: the narration of its consequences.

These include many similar acts, which, were they not its consequences, would be equally inexplicable: Faustus's consenting to be fobbed off with 'curtezans,' his acceptance of the vision of sin instead of that of God, his appeal to Helen—as though there were a chance of its success—for immortality. The tragedy of life, as presented by Marlowe in this play, is that it may be riddled with acts like these. But more striking are the occasions when Faustus—chiefly at the instance of Mephistophilis, who seems detailed for the purpose—repeats the original act in an ever grosser form.

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Yet one of Mephistophilis's first speeches is no other than a rebuke to pride:

> Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? speak.
> —That was the cause, but yet per accident.
> For when we hear one rack the name of God,
> Abjure the scriptures, and his Saviour Christ,
> Wee flie, in hope to get his glorious soule.

Faustus might learn, if he would listen, that far from receiving the omnipotence with which he flattered himself, and from freeing himself from the necessity of humiliation: there are still conditions to which he must be humbled, he is to receive nothing but at a price. And further he might reflect that, as his soul is capable of glory, it is capable of sin and damnation. But both suggestions are brushed aside; the price, he makes it clear, is to him as little as no price, for men's souls are 'vaine trifles.' These or similar words he repeats on all occasions when Mephistophilis—it almost seems of set purpose to disabuse him—bids him consider the bargain he wishes to conclude:

> But may I raise up spirits when I please? . . .
> Then there's enough for ten thousand soules.

Though informed in all frankness that he receives diabolic visits only that he may be dragged down to hell, and that Lucifer shows him favour in order to make him a *socium doloris*, he protests defiantly, 'Come, I thinke hell's a fable.'

> This word damnation terrifies not him,

he says of himself:

> For he confounds hell in Elizium.
> His ghost will be with the old Philosophers . . .

Such is his pride, his refusal to bow to external authority of any kind, that even on the world of spirits, of which he has no experience, he maintains his own opinion against that of one who has come direct from thence; and whom he is talking to at all, only because he believes him to have done so.

This wilful blindness, this pertinacity in self-deception, is brought out most clearly in the passage in which he enquires about

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the fate of Lucifer. The ' prince of devils,' he is told, fell (as he himself is falling) ' by aspiring pride and insolence.' ' And what are,' he goes on, ' you that live with Lucifer?' Mephistophilis replies:

> Unhappy spirits that fell with *Lucifer,*
> Conspir'd against our God with *Lucifer,*
> And are for ever damnd with *Lucifer.*

Almost inarticulate with rage or grief, he can do little more than repeat the name which is for him the sum of both. In reply to the next question, ' Where are you damn'd?' he can force out only two words: ' In hel.' But Faustus, insensitive to all things since he is so to his own good, continues the cross-examination

> How comes it then that thou art out of hel?

Mephistophilis bursts into lines which, in their context and by contrast with the broken utterances which have gone before, are among the most eloquent in the play:

> Why this is hel, nor am I out of it:
> Thinkst thou that I who say the face of God,
> And tasted the eternal joyes of heaven,
> Am not tormented with ten thousand hels,
> In being depriv'd of everlasting blisse?
> O *Faustus,* leave these frivolous demands,
> Which strike a terror to my fainting soule.

Even Faustus it seems must be impressed. But no: with a coxcombry which may arouse either hatred or contempt he mocks:

> What, is great *Mephistophilis* so passionate? . . .
> Learne thou of *Faustus* manly fortitude,
> And scorne those joyes thou never shalt possesse.

It is as though a man, meeting another who had barely escaped from an accident with his life, informed him of a conviction that fire does not burn, stones do not crush, nor metals maim.

In this passage, as it may not seem wholly in place in a tragedy, Marlowe may be rehearsing the ' savage farce ' of *The Jew of Malta.*

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The two plays are however closely related, and a touch of the manner of the one is perhaps not only admissible, but necessary to point the other. Both have as their theme the ghastly folly which is sin: but whereas in *The Jew*, being for the moment out of patience with mankind, Marlowe is concerned to express only the folly, what principally moves his interest in *Dr. Faustus* is still the ghastliness.

This is developed through one sin after another, following their generation as it has already been traced from the momentary, inexplicable, but undeniable beginning. It is completed and concentrated in the final scene; in which Faustus having proclaimed he is not terrified by 'the word damnation,' is overwhelmed by the thing; having scorned Mephistophilis's prophecy that experience would change his mind, is compelled to cower in abjection for the prophecy to be fulfilled. The Elizabethan audience—if I may refer to it again— expected it to be fulfilled, and would have been outraged had it not been so. And so I think would any reader, however little in sympathy with the ideas in the play, if only able to see the ideas which are there.

Many readers have not been able, blinded chiefly by the prejudices of the nineteenth century. It is surprising how many even detailed opinions about Marlowe's Faustus, which are obviously incorrect once they are inquired into, are equally obviously correct of the Faust of Goethe. The one figure has been obscured, identified with the other. But he is of quite a different mettle: he does not spring from a world in which all that matters is action or enterprise, the more violent, the more inconsiderate, the better:

> Säume nicht, dich zu erdreisten,
> Wenn die Menge zaudernd schweift—

but rather from that world from which springs also Dante's Bertran de Born. The latter had not been over-considerate in action, but was humiliated by rather than proud of the fact. If he had a scrap of Bertran's virtue—but alas! he has none—Faustus might repeat with him:

> così s'osserva in me lo contrapasso.

JAMES SMITH.

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EDMUND RUBBRA AND SYMPHONIC FORM[1]

ONE has only to read Shaw's brilliant musical journalism in order to realize how, by the end of the nineteenth century, English musical culture had sunk to its nadir. The disintegrating process, the crumbling deliquescence, had been, I suppose, practically continuous since about 1750 ; and if a great original genius like Elgar survived it, he too offered no reorientation, no hope for the future.

Yet the renaissance *has* come, the reorientation has been accomplished ; and though it is difficult to separate cause from effect we may at least say that the reorientation is as it were symbolized in the work of three men: Vaughan Williams as musicologist and creative artist ; Cecil Sharp as rescuer, melodramatically in the nick of time, of our great tradition of folk-music; and Sir Richard Terry as rediscoverer and performer of the inexhaustible riches of the music of Tudor England. It is difficult to over-estimate the debt that English music to-day owes to these three men who re-established the continuity of the traditions of our musical culture. They made it possible for England to produce, perhaps belatedly, in Delius her own great artist of the elegiac, of the twilight of romanticism ; later they made it possible for Walton and Lambert to reconcile the jazz distortions and agitations of the contemporary scene with something of the lyrical flexibility of the Elizabethans, the aristocratic gravity of Purcell, the more massive good sense of Boyce, and, in Walton's case, with the 'noble' lyricism of the Edwardian Elgar also ; while Vaughan Williams himself has produced in recent years, as the culmination of his early experimentalism, those magnificent works—in which the richness of our past is implicit in an austerely immediate present—that give him a position of such commanding authority in the history of British culture. At a time when artists have so little

[1]The first two paragraphs and a few scattered phrases of this essay have already appeared in an article on recent British music which I contributed to *The Listener*.

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reason to congratulate themselves on their relation to the society that ought to succour them, these men have at least made it less exhaustingly difficult for genius to bring its imaginings to fruition.

Consider the case of Edmund Rubbra, whom I don't hesitate to call, in a small way, a genius. When I heard the first performance of his *Symphony No. 1* I was convinced immediately that here was a man with something individual and interesting to say and with the ability to say it clearly and without pretension. With the exception of the Vaughan Williams of *Job* and of a few subsequent works, of the Warlock of *The Curlew* and of van Dieren and Delius, who are dead and whose music can hardly, anyway, be claimed as representatively English, Rubbra seems to me the most genuinely original musical mind which twentieth-century England has produced. Probably the improved conditions of our musical life occasioned by the English renaissance to some extent sanctioned his development as a creative artist, yet it may be unhesitatingly said that his is the one example of music by a contemporary British composer that borrows nothing directly from Vaughan Williams or from van Dieren or Holst or from any composer of the past, however deep his spiritual affinity with certain aspects of the music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may be ; of music the technical traits of which cannot be discussed in terms of ' influence ' at all but have their ultimate justification in themselves ; of music in which the idiom and the ways of feeling are one and completely unprecedented, being the work of that *rara avis* of our or most other times, an original genius.

Rubbra seems to me for this reason a more remarkable composer than the more successful and perhaps more easily appreciated Walton, whom I would call not so much a genius as a man of very great talent. Walton has not, I think, a really original mind. His idiom is basically conventional, vivified by a few quirks of manner, some of which are genuinely individual (such as the note of *malizia*, abrupt, brutish and bristling), some of which are borrowed or modified from other composers (from Purcell or Elgar for example). I do not wish to deny the value of Walton's achievement. He is a brilliant naturally endowed musician and his *Symphony* is a landmark in English musical history, though I fancy it will look less impressively conspicuous in twenty years'

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time. Yet this distinction between genius and talent seems to me worth labouring because I think it might be argued that, musically accomplished as the best works of Walton such as the Symphony or the Viola Concerto may be, nonetheless Walton's is an idiom that is made, whereas Rubbra's is an idiom that is, as it were, born, whose minutest detail is an organic growth. I do not, for instance, think that Rubbra would be capable of composing music as significantly bad as Walton's *In Honour of the City of London*, an (admittedly commissioned) work in which the composer mechanically exploits, in the ' continental ' manner of Bliss, certain of his own mannerisms which have proved most superficially ' effective.' If Rubbra's invention fails him, as it does at times in, say, the *Phantasy* for two violins and piano, it does not imply any failure of authenticity ; it is rather a failure in clarity of communication and the music becomes, not less authentically original, but merely comparatively awkward and crabbed.

Like all true originality, however, Rubbra's is consistent with tradition, and both originality and traditionalism are equally unselfconscious. His work has none of that deliberate regressive anglophilism which mars the earlier music of Vaughan Williams, though of course it was only by means of such conscious deliberation that Vaughan Williams was able to effect so intrinsic a change in British musical history and to create those late compositions whose native virility is as powerful as it is effortless. Primarily Rubbra's idiom is a melodic one, and his lines are extraordinarily alert and sensitive, with a strange quality of precariousness, which is technically incarnated in their tendency to push tonality to the utmost limits while remaining basically secure, and of latency, which finds idiomatic manifestation in the unusual and subtle key- or rather tonal-relationships existing between the developing phrases of the lyrical themes ; (for Rubbra's music cannot be said, in the conventional sense, to ' modulate '). This is a melodic speech that is fundamentally vocal, the lines being long and assymetrical, accentuated in accordance with the natural rhythms of the human singing voice.[1] Like van Dieren's, it is thus closer

[1]On reading this, Rubbra told me that while composing he conceives his themes in such powerfully vocal terms as sometimes to produce, in his mind, a vision of a human figure actually singing them.

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to the melodic sense of the music of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries than to that of the eighteenth and nineteenth where the basic rhythms are those of the classical symphonic form which derive from the dance rather than from the human voice ; but Rubbra's spiritual affinities are specifically with *English* music of the sixteenth century whereas van Dieren is essentially European and cosmopolitan, and there is, of course, no resemblance between the melodic idioms of the two composers—Rubbra's comparatively austere and energetic, van Dieren's poignantly sensuous and comparatively chromatic—except the general one of similarity of approach and method. If one considers Rubbra's vocal music one sees how closely the nervous contour of the lines—neither diatonic nor modal yet appertaining to both since he is above all a lyrical composer and lyricism cannot properly exist outside the range of a stable tonality—is associated with the natural accentuation of the rhythms of the English language.

In the *Spenser Sonnets* for tenor and and string quartet there is a wonderful equilibrium between lyrical flexibility and the claims of the spoken word. Thus in the setting of Sonnet XLIII phrases such as ' choked with overflowing gall ' or even single words such as ' pleading ' or ' humility ' give rise to a glowing efflorescence, sometimes accompanied by a singular shift of tonality, in a lyrical line that is conceived in fluid phrases of enormous span, moulded to the rhythms and inflexions of the human singing voice. Note also in Sonnet II, how subtly the speech rhythms are played off against the lyricism in the phrase ' And seeke some succour both to ease my smart,' how poignant is the effect of the tritone on the words ' afflicted mood ' and of the falling diminished seventh (across the bar-rhythm) on ' breake forth ' ; and note how all these expressive devices arise directly from the verbal text and yet are inseparable from the proud arching contour of the lines. The vocal lines in these Spenser sonnets would make a completely satisfying musical experience if sung by a solo voice without the quartet parts. There are few composers of the twentieth century about whose melodies a similar claim could be substantiated.

In the way in which the emotional associations of words or phrases give rise to ardently expressive configurations and shifts of tonality in the lyrical texture, as well as in the sustained power and rhythmic freedom of his melodies considered as wholes, Rubbra

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is very close to the melodic principles of Byrd and Wilbye. His melodies are not, could not be, ' like ' those of Wilbye or of Byrd, but they re-establish the contact with these composers that had been lost to English music since the time of Purcell, so that we see that the spiritual affinity of his music with that of the music of Tudor England is not a matter of influence at all but is the consequence of a native habit of mind. Even the lyrical flexibility of his writing for strings—as in the poised yet glowingly lyrical *Second Violin Sonata* or the *Fantasia* for violin and small orchestra —seems partly conditioned by his appreciation of the vocal qualities of his native language.[1] I think there is a similar relationship between the French language and the melodic lines of Gabriel Fauré, and it is a relationship that seems to me to be fundamental to all great lyrical music.

Since he is essentially a melodic composer it follows that Rubbra is also a contrapuntal one, for counterpoint is the inevitable

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[1]It is instructive in this connection to compare the nature of Byrd's vocal lines when he is setting English words to music (as in the *Great Service*) with the nature of them when he is setting Latin words (as in the *5 part Mass*). In both he manifests a superb command of vocal technique, but the lines in the *Great Service* are much bolder and more idiosyncratic, abounding in irregular rhythms and intervals. Although one must not put too much stress on particular examples, since the services of many English composers seem to have been sung indiscriminately to Latin or English words, yet there can, as a general principle, be little doubt that the daringness and ruggedness—the rhythmic complexities, the leaps of major sixths and ninths, the preference for accented passing notes and false relations—which we recognize as peculiarly characteristic of the polyphonic composers of sixteenth century England, compared with the suavity of the contemporary French and Italian schools, is largely due to the nature of the language spoken in sixteenth century England. (It is probable that English was then spoken with considerably more inflexion than it is to-day). And as a corollary of this we may mention the text-book commonplace that the mellifluousness of the Italian language conditions the fact that the tradition of Italian music has always been pre-eminently vocal and lyrical.

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result of conceiving music in terms of melodic lines and from it all the great traditional polyhonic forms are evolved. It is Rubbra's mastery of contrapuntal forms—a mastery that is not of course a matter of technical exercise but of intense spiritual discipline—that is the external manifestation of the peculiar sanity, the mature and civilized impersonality, that we recognize as characteristic of his music even when it seems to deal—for he is, being essentially honest, as uncompromisingly a composer of the twentieth century as the Vaughan Williams of the F minor or the Walton of the B flat minor Symphony—in emotions of the most exacerbated ferocity. Rubbra's musical thought, though ' romantic,' is usually *instinctively* contrapuntal ; the toughness of emotion which this toughness of craftsmanship represents—the fascinating complexity of his counterpoint, the potent independence of his parts—shows up the spurious virility of Hindemithology for what it is worth, and it is a freedom from flabbiness or excess which is as noticeable in the lucid delicacy of the lines of the fugal coda to the First Symphony as in the agile and vigorous rhythmic organization of the fugue that forms the penultimate movement to the *Sinfonia Concertante*. In the vocal works Rubbra's counterpoint is closest in spirit to that of Byrd and the great English polyphonists—one of the *Five Motets* is a superbly executed double canon. In the purely instrumental works he has obviously learned much from Bach, greatest of all contrapuntists, though again there is no question of influence involved. In either case it is music created with true artistic detachment, the product of a live mind, foolproof against ironic criticism.

These close-woven melodic lines, combined together with such contrapuntal virtuosity, produce harmonies as proudly individual as is the sinewy contour of the lines. Although the harmony often sounds extremely harsh and complex the chords which are employed are seldom very elaborate or chromatic in themselves, being composed mainly of simple triads and bare fourths and fifths polyphonically juxtaposed in such a variety of ways and in such subtle combinations as to give an impression of the most diversified expressiveness and of a kind of rich austerity. In this respect Rubbra's harmonic sense also has affinities with that of the sixteenth century polyphonists, for the dramatic effectiveness and vividness of, say, Byrd's harmonies is entirely to be attributed to the virile

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independence of his lines and rhythms. Some of Rubbra's cadences especially—in the *Spenser Sonnets* as well as in the *Five Motets*—have a flavour distinctly evocative of the cadential clichés of the sixteenth century, but again we do not feel that it is at all a matter of pastiche but rather of consanguinity of mind and of respect for the natural principles of vocal melodic construction.

The most uncompromising harmonic harshness is justified if it is polyphonically logical ; and in Rubbra's purely vocal works such as the *Motets* the powerful harmonic effect is quite inseparable from the individual rhythms and structural flexibility of the melodic line. Thus in the setting of Donne's great *Hymn to God the Father* the slowing up of the rhythm, the leap, in the soprano parts, of a minor sixth and then the semitonal fall, on the words ' For I have more ' are wonderfully expressive as concomitants of the vocal line at the same time as they produce the poignant dissonant harmony ; and in the magnificent passage beginning ' I have a sinne of feare that when I have spunne ' we may note how the anguished discord on ' feare 'emerges with exquisite fluidity in the melodic lines from the muffled repeated notes (on a simple minor triad) of the preceding bar ; how the harmonic catch-in-the-breath on ' last thred ' has its counterpart in the quivering resilience of the slowed-up rhythm ; how the altos and tenors cling in triplet rhythm to the persistent A flat minor triad while the basses, in bare fifths, fall chromatically until, the altos suddenly leaping through an eloquent augmented second, they create a bitter cry of despair on the word ' shore ' ; how then the sopranos enter with their triumphant repeated Es on ' Sweare by thyself that at my death ' until the whole choir swells in translucent major triad harmonies. In passages like this it is impossible to conceive of the harmonic effect apart from the contour of the individual lines that produce it ; and although the harmonic *relations* are elaborate and original the staple harmonic material depends on the primary triads and their inversions just as it did in the music of the sixteenth century.

In compositions which employ intrumental as well as or instead of vocal resources Rubbra does not disdain homophonic principles, but his harmonies are always fluidly shifting and are never conceived statically. By merging independent lines and flowing harmonies which are in themselves quite simple Rubbra sometimes achieves sonorous effects not altogether distinct from the peculiar astringent

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piquancy which characterizes the harmonies of the early (more Schönbergian) work of van Dieren. Superficially there may not seem to be much resemblance ; Rubbra's is the more patently masculine mind and, I suppose, the less profound ; yet no composer of to-day has approached more nearly to the bitter-sweet tragedy of the delicate intertwining of lines which make up van Dieren's *Chinese Symphony*, the piano *Sketches*, and the *Cenci* song than does Rubbra in his works for chorus and orchestra *The Dark Night of the Soul* (words from Saint John of the Cross) and *O unwithered eagle void*—particularly the last named. Despite the highly wrought polyphonic texture the effect of this score, like that of the *Chinese Symphony*, is almost ' colouristic ' ; and in his piano writing Rubbra will often alternate his typical terse contrapuntal treatment with a sonorous impressionistic arpeggio technique that reminds us, different as it is in temper and ethos, that the composer is an enthusiastic admirer of Debussy's keyboard music. Such arpeggio figurations are never, however, exploited for their own sake, but only as a background to the sustained lyrical line of a voice or solo instrument (*vide* the first movement of the Violin *Sonata No. 2*).

While Rubbra usually employs a method of free unsymmetrical rhythmic accentuation in accordance with the metres of the human voice his rhythmic sense is often simultaneously influenced by physical movement and the actions of the dance, and the nervously intense quality of his music is partly due to a kind of incessant dynamic friction between the lyrical plasticity of his interwoven ' vocal ' melodic lines and the regularly periodic insistence of powerful, rhythmically opposed pedal-points. This peculiar feature of Rubbra's work is epitomized in *Prism*, music which he has recently composed expressly for dancing and which may be described as a sort of polyphonic-contrapuntal ballet ; (the score includes a double fugue on themes in contrasted rhythms worked out independently, a movement of masterly contrapuntal logic actively adapted to the motions of the dance). Even in some quite tranquil pieces such as the *Spenser Sonnet 2*, particularly the closing section, this dual frictional sense of simultaneously vocal and dynamic rhythm is pervasive, while it attains its most central manifestation in the Symphonies, and is the most important clue to an understanding of Rubbra's contribution to the problem of Symphonic Form.

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To make a rough generalization one may say that up to about the middle of the seventeenth century art-music had been *primarily* vocal and its natural lines and rhythms those of the human voice. After that date the dance gained prominence, and with it emerged the diatonic key-system and the classical symphonic form. Of course these changes cannot be separated from the cultural drift of civilization ; but taking this into consideration it is hardly an exaggeration to say that this great diatonic system in which so much magnificent music has been created led eventually, through the preponderance of harmonic resource and the decay of the traditional polyphonic forms that it encouraged, to the starvation of melodic utterance. The efforts of the most interesting composers of the twentieth century—one thinks of such diverse artists as van Dieren, Busoni, Sibelius, Bartók, Janácek, Fauré, Roussel, Vaughan Williams and, as we have seen, Rubbra—have almost all tended towards the re-establishment of melodic utterance based on the rhythms of the human voice as the *modus vivendi* of the art of music. Yet the symphony is the pre-eminent form on which twentieth-century composers have been succoured, and the symphony, we have observed, has always been primarily homophonic. Is it possible—the question inevitably offers itself—to reconcile the principles of symphonic construction with the writing of free independent melodic lines? or, if the symphony is outmoded, can any other form be substituted for it?

Of course the problem has already been solved in the finale of the *Jupiter* symphony of Mozart, to whom most things indeed seem to have been possible. But this is an instance miraculous in its isolation ; and although fugal it is not quite a construction of ' free ' polyphonic lines. More recently we find, in the almost Palestrinian purity of Sibelius's Fourth, Sixth and Seventh symphonies, a distinct increase in subtlety of polyphonic organization accompanied by a slight though significant flavour of modality ; yet for all this Sibelius's symphonic form remains fundamentally homophonic and in some respects the product of a cultural ethos very different from that with which artists of the immediate future will, it is to be expected, have to contend. Sporadic attempts to reconcile symphonic form with polyphonic principles have tentatively been made by other contemporary composers such as Vaughan Williams, Walton and Roussel, but I believe that

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Rubbra is the first composer to tackle the problem systematically, with full realization of the implications involved, and it seems to me a problem of immense importance with reference to the future of music.

The classical symphony, I have said, depended on the diatonic key-system, to which was attributable its characteristic construction of exposition, development and recapitulation. There is, then, one very obvious reason why the symphony of Rubbra cannot accept the classical symphonic form and that is because he does not accept the diatonic key-system ; the fact that his melodies are constructed in the ' free ' vocal manner of the sixteenth century rather than according to the formal patterns of the eighteenth century is a corollary of this. Rubbra adopts Rimsky-Korsakov's, of all people's, celebrated adage that good orchestration is simply good part writing with a literalness, an awareness of the consequences, that would have been beyond the Russian's comprehension ; but it is patent that with such an enormous diversity of parts as is obtained by allotting an independent melodic life to each instrument of the orchestra (except of course the percussion) chaos would result unless some contrapuntal means—some means other than that of the diatonic key-system—of achieving structural unity were arrived at. Rubbra achieves such unity by playing off the fluid contrapuntal evolution of his lyrical themes against the insistent building up, in a manner that is *cumulative and dynamic* in effect, of linear formulæ *which are derived from characteristic aspects or features of these themes*. The main lyrical melodies develop of their own volition, without regard to preconceived notions of what symphonic form ought to be, and in so doing inevitably generate subsidiary motives that provide the *contrast* which is essential to the construction of a large-scale movement—and which in the classical symphony is inherent in the diatonic key system—so that even parts which may intermittently seem to be fulfilling an unimportant or ' accompanying ' function nonetheless preserve the most closely wrought thematic unity.

In the first movement of *Symphony No. 1* there are two main lyrical themes, contrasted by very original and surprising tonal relationships, but connected. These themes are as it were dissected, each typical figure being subjected to the most exhaustive exploration. While the central lyrical themes are simultaneously

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being contrapuntally extended in opposed rhythms, tiny figures derived from them such as the falling semitonal inflexion on the strong beat are developed with such uncompromising rigour and in such multiplicity of combinations as to produce—anchored as they are to one note or sequence of notes—an impression of agonized nervous energy. (A comparatively simple instance is provided by a passage beginning on page 40 of the full score). From this dissection of unsymmetrical plastic themes many counter-themes are evolved until the movement concludes with a progressive etiolation of the melodic material over a grim and ingenious pedal on C sharp.

The second movement, *Perigourdine*, is constructed in similar fashion though more simply since there is only one main theme, an eighteenth-century French dance tune which is itself comparatively straightforward and diatonic, although interspersed with the deceptive minor cadence characteristic of French folk-music. But the finest example of his method is provided by the long penultimate Lento, in which every detail of a melody of sustained poise and dignity is dissected and extended to produce a multitude of lyrical figures which, coagulating in a theme of the most serene gravity, become the subject of an elegiac fugal coda: the working out of this fugue is not merely a prodigious technical feat but a genuine spiritual consummation of all that has gone before.

The first movement of the *Symphony No. 2* begins with the full statement of an enormous sombrely intense melody given out unison by strings, horn and bassoon. From the contrapuntal extension and analysis of this emerges a second theme, more suave and gentle, and aspects of the two melodies are then played off against each other until they finally coalesce in a passage analogous to the recapitulation section of the conventional sonata form. In the Scherzo the process is reversed, the movement beginning with a series of linear fragments, some explosive and violent, others quietly intense, which are gradually built up into self-subsistent themes. (Sibelius sometimes uses a similar method, though he lavishes on it less contrapuntal resource).[1] In the adagio, perhaps the most

[1]Compare Rubbra's original treatment of the concerto form in the *Fantasia* for violin and small orchestra. This work *starts* with the cadenza for the solo instrument and then gradually builds up the

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proudly beautiful and moving passage in all Rubbra's orchestral work, a single meditative melody is extended in free polyhony, from which subsidiary phrases emerge, but the close formal logic—and also the atmosphere of nervous tension—of the movement is preserved by the insistence of a powerful pedal-point. The last movement is rather surprisingly a conventional Rondo, treated with great contrapuntal ingenuity. It is thematically and structurally in contrast with the other movements ; emotionally it is, as it were, a stringently bitter epilogue, a commentary on the other movements, whereas the First Symphony moves irresistibly forwards to the fugal coda which is the climax and consummation of the whole work.

To construct a symphony, as does Rubbra, on polyphonic principles requires a sensibility of great originality and authenticity, for it is by his melodic utterance that a composer must stand or fall, here that he is least able to smother emotional crudity in artifice. In such a symphony ' orchestration,' for instance, cannot be made to do duty in lieu of intrinsic melodic life, because it cannot be conceived in terms of tone-colour at all but only with reference to the precise stress and degree of independence which, at a particular moment, is deemed apposite to a particular melodic line. I am inclined to think that Rubbra relies a little too much on the heavy brass for the clear demarcation of his more violent counterpoints, so that one's nervous resistence is occasionally worn down before a climax has exerted its full *musical*—its structurally and polyphonically logical—effect. The composer seems to be aware that this balance between the nervous and the musical impression constitutes a real problem, for in the *Symphony No. 3*, which is at present in embryonic form, he dispenses with the heavier brass and writes for a comparatively small orchestra. Of course the omission of the brass deprives Rubbra of the most obvious, the most sonorously vivid, method of outlining contrapuntal contrasts, and the comparatively level tone-colour of the more restricted medium makes the task of polyphonic-symphonic construction increasingly subtle: but Rubbra always seems to find

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' themes ' from the polyphonic (or orchestral) extension of the ' motives ' of the cadenza. The composition concludes with the statement of the ' main ' theme in its complete form.

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the greater stimulus the tougher is the technical nut to crack ; and if he has not yet achieved a formal perfection comparable with that of Sibelius's later symphonies in which idea and tone-colour are inseparable, we must remember that the technical problem he has set himself is intrinsically more complex. I certainly think that Rubbra's is the most important contribution to the problem of symphonic form that has been made since Sibelius, and that there is in his symphonies no phrase that is not sanctioned by intense emotional experience, no contrapuntal ingenuity that is not also an incarnation of life.

Most often it is, perhaps, a bitter, an unhappy, an angry rather than a tragic kind of life ; yet in its very honesty there is evidence of a search for a more satisfyingly reposeful attitude to experience, and we have the last movement, particularly the fugal coda, of the First Symphony, and the slow movement of the Second, to prove that the composer does not merely seek. ' Here is music,' says Mr. Eric Blom, ' of that classical quality, so rare in the music of to-day, of profound feeling perfectly disciplined.' I do not know a symphonic movement in twentieth-century music that approaches these in formal logic and emotional coherence except a few movements of Sibelius and Roussel. With the latter composer Rubbra has a certain consanguinity of outlook, though he is as fundamentally English as Roussel is French. The sustained melodies of both composers are ambiguous and complicated in tonality and betray a fondness for sinewy intense intervals such as the augmented second ; while the highly wrought polyphonic texture, the lucid sobriety of orchestration of Rubbra's symphonies represents the closest approach that English music can hope to make to that wise urbanity, seemingly the product of an age-long heritage of civilized living, which is most admirably epitomized in such late works of Roussel as the String Trio and the Third and Fourth Symphonies, though the French composer does not conceive the symphony in such consistently polyphonic terms. Rubbra's music does not, inevitably, share Roussel's peculiarly French and elegant distinction, but it is similarly civilized in its more energetic toughness, being essentially masculine music, unaffected and unafraid. For this reason it should be, apart from its intrinsic merit, one of the few lastingly valuable testaments of our times.

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But if Rubbra's is a voice that we—I mean people of the modern world, particularly English people—ought surely to heed attentively, there is really little if any evidence to lead one to believe that even the reasonably responsible and intelligent people of England have much use for him. True, the improved conditions of our musical life have given one or two of his works a hearing, and there is goodwill in plenty prevalent in our musical circles ; the trouble is that it is goodwill without, or with the wrong sort of, direction. The enthusiastic reception accorded to Rubbra's First Symphony is somewhat discounted when one finds Moeran's Symphony likewise acclaimed as a composition ' of the first importance ' ; and the case is not an isolated one, but merely symptomatic, for how is one to explain away (for instance) the general acceptance of Bliss as a great composer, though he may be a clever musician ; the triumphant salutation of Dyson's recent Symphony, a work compound of unconscious reminiscence ; above all the acclamation of Lennox Berkeley's oratorio *Jonah* as a ' worthy successor ' to Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast*, a composition which although in my opinion among the least successful of Walton's achievements is obviously the work of a serious musician. I do not want to suggest that Moeran's Symphony is bad as the Berkeley is bad ; rather is it pathetic to see the composer endeavouring to keep ' up-to-date ' by pepping up a sensibility that was to begin with only second-hand etiolated Delius and early (Irishised) Vaughan Williams by indulging in pastiche of almost every composer who has made a personal contribution to English music during the last forty years ; (the attempts at Waltonian syncopations are peculiarly distressing). Yet the confusion of values that can hail the Moeran and the Rubbra symphonies *in the same terms* (one reviewer paid homage to Mr. Moeran's Symphony of Granite) is not a matter that can be dismissed as intrinsically comic, and it takes on a more sinister aspect still when we remember that the B.B.C. habitually perform Rubbra, if they notice him at all, in company with Benjamin Britten, Lennox Berkeley, Leighton Lucas and the rest of the motley. Two of these seem to me the ' continental ' type of music-maker who have drifted into musical careers by accident ; and if the Britten of *A Boy Was Born* once had a genuine if rather facile talent it has now been dissipated in a series of facetious exercises which

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bump on the rock-bottom of bathos in the oh so clumsily clever clap-trap of the recent Piano *Concerto*.

Britten is yet another twentieth-century artist destroyed by the chief evil of our cultural life to-day—the formation, in default of solidarity, of clique and coterie. Rubbra has austerely avoided contact with any such clique, either of the Britten-Berkeley-Auden-Isherwood type which depends on taking in (in both senses of the phrase) the outside world for the purposes of social and possibly material aggrandizement,[1] or of the van Dieren-Heseltine-Grey type which depends on shutting the outside world out, creating one's own mythology and one's own audience of friends and colleagues. Rubbra's magnificent integrity as an artist has been the safer for his austerity ; but he has to face the fact that he is therefore reduced to working in a social vacuum. He hasn't an audience that much wants to understand ; and how long an artist can continue to create without an audience to create for depends ultimately and unanswerably on the artist's toughness and virility. Rubbra's toughness and virility are certainly not in doubt, but his is indeed a heavy responsibility.

These are doleful speculations but it is well that we should indulge in them occasionally, lest we should grow complacent remembering how things are better than they were, how energetically we (with the B.B.C.'s collaboration) encourage our ' promising young composers.' I believe Rubbra is the most important living composer of his generation which this country has produced ; infrequently we commission him to write music for a ballet, to orchestrate someone else's music for a ballet, to compose some pieces for a pageant. The larger part of his full-scale orchestral, choral, and concerted works remains unpublished and unperformed.

A friend—a professional musician—to whom I communicated these opinions suggested that I was unduly pessimistic, that in circles where music is taken seriously it is tacitly (at least)

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[1]This group is indeed rapidly becoming indistinguishable from the world of our moth-eaten twentieth-century Everyman himself. After Messrs. Auden and MacNeice's trips to Iceland comes the exquisite consummation, and Mr. Benjamin Britten has written some beautifully modern music for Mr. Priestley's latest play about Time and the After-Life.

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recognized that Rubbra is an artist of quite different stamp from the Brittens and Rawsthornes of the contemporary scene. Perhaps a tacit recognition is better than nothing, but it seems to recommend itself but feebly to the powers that be, for it is the Brittens and Rawsthornes that habitually get published and performed. And if they are enjoying a *succès d'estime*—a flash in the pan—one knows only too well that when their glitter is tarnished and their flash reduced to a glimmer it is not Rubbra who will supersede them but a fresher flash, the latest disciple of the I.S.C.M. There is one encouraging sign, and I have pleasure in concluding this article by congratulating Universal Edition (London) on having presented Rubbra with a contract. It is a belated step, but one in the right direction.

W. H. MELLERS.

LIST OF PRINCIPAL WORKS BY EDMUND RUBBRA

(Compositions to which no publisher's name is allotted are in manuscript).

Title	*Opus No.*	*Publisher*
The Secret Hymnody for chorus and orchestra.	1	
Sonata No. 1 for violin and piano	11	
La Belle Dame Sans Merci for chorus and orchestra.	12	
Phantasy for two violins and piano.	16	Oxford Press
Phantasy for string quartet and piano.	24	
Triple Fugue for orchestra.	25	
Ballad of Tristram for baritone and small orchestra.	26	
Concerto for piano and orchestra.	30	
Sonata No. 2 for violin and piano.	31	Oxford Press
Four Medieval Latin Lyrics for chorus.	32	
String Quartet No. 1	35	
One-act opera *Bee bee bei.*	36	
Five unaccompanied *Motets.*	37	Augener
Sinfonia Concertante for piano and orchestra.	38	
Fantasia for violin and orchestra.	40	

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Title	*Opus No.*	*Publisher*
Two Poems for choir and orchestra.	41	
Settings of ten *Spenser Sonnets* for voice and string quartet.	42 and 43	
Symphony No. 1.	44	Universal
Symphony No. 2.	45	Universal
Ballet *Prism*.	48	
Farnaby Suite for orchestra.	50	Universal
Unaccompanied madrigals.	51	

COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

THE BACKGROUND OF TWENTIETH CENTURY LETTERS

A NUMBER OF PEOPLE, by Sir Edward Marsh (Heinemann, 15/-).
UNFORGOTTEN YEARS, by Logan Pearsall Smith (Constable, 10/-).
ENEMIES OF PROMISE, by Cyril Connolly (Routledge, 10/6).
MODERN POETRY, by Louis MacNeice (Oxford, 7/6).

Sir Edward Marsh was the patron of the Georgian poets, Mr. Connolly is the co-mate of the post-war literary gang, Mr. MacNeice is a contributor to the contemporary poetic renaissance. Each has recently published a book about his circle. We have the socio-literary history of three phases for inspection, and may take the opportunity to draw some conclusions about the literary *milieu* of our age, the background of twentieth century letters. If you are inclined to think this a norm read the history of the same period in American letters, as recorded by Malcolm Cowley in *Exile's Return* and Lincoln Steffens in his autobiography. Sir Edward Marsh's picture has nothing in common with Steffens's, MacNeice's case-history of self and partners in no way resembles

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Cowley's. No one could deny that the American history represents a healthy development, an evolution out of chaos and futility to a general recognition of standards and an agreement as to abiding values, in literary criticism. The ' critical ' sections of the two later English books are depressing reading. Mr. Conolly's list of who's who in modern literature, his choice of the hopes for English literature and those whom he thinks are reviving imaginative writing, has to be read to be believed, and Mr. Connolly is an exceptionally able and bright-minded member of our higher journalism. However, the third section of his book, ' A Georgian Boyhood,' should be read carefully by literary critics as well as educationists: his account of the Eton education and its effect on taste and character—Eton standing for the English public-school system generally—offers a comprehensive answer to the questions raised by a comparison of these books with their American equivalents. The information he unconsciously gives about the relation between knowing the right people and getting accepted in advance of production as a literary value is even more useful than the analysis he consciously makes of the stultifying effects of an exclusively classical education conducted in an exclusively upper-class and male establishment.

Sir Edward Marsh's book raises all the questions. He is a beautiful specimen, a perfect litmus-paper without, as a literary critic, any individuality, personal taste or character. A classic at Westminster, he passed second in the Civil Service examination and thereafter, mixing as intensively as possible with the best people, he became an innocent blotting-paper to all literary aspirants he met in the right company, particularly good-looking young men with fetching manners. He was overwhelmed by Rupert Brooke, and after meeting Ivor Novello he became so impressed with the talents of the author of *Keep the Home Fires Burning* that he even took a passionate interest in musical comedy. It was his representative quality that enabled him to produce in the Georgian Poetry-Books something that went like hot-cakes (the second volume sold nineteen thousand). And as his classical education gave him an unshakable conception of what poetry ought to be, so his environment gave him no occasion to doubt his rightness of judgment. He still believes that ' Rupert Brooke is destined to remain as a considerable figure in English

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Literature,' that Gordon Bottomley's and Lascelles Abercrombie's poetic dramas are great poetry, that Georgian poetry will soon be rehabilitated, and is confident of his own place beside Tottel (predicted by Gosse) for anthologizing it. He still feels how right he was to refuse in 1925 to have anything to do with the ' new directions ' of English poetry (the only reference to Eliot's poetry is a silly joke) and it never occurs to him, any more than to Mr. Connolly, to question Mr. Desmond MacCarthy's right to refuse anyone else the right to criticize Milton—for both of them it is enough that he is an Etonian.

The same complacency, an inability to apply purely literary criticism to literature because of an unconscious acceptance of social values in this as in all other fields, is visible in Connolly almost equally, even though he sets out to account for his feeling that something is wrong somewhere. *The Waves* is a supreme work of art, Isherwood and Orwell are the coming great writers, ' The prose of Spender is also unusual, and in his critical book *The Destructive Element*, he makes a study of that great Mandarin, Henry James, which must affect the values of any contemporary who reads it.' I suppose it is because instead of knowing Mr. Spender personally I have been reading Henry James's novels for fifteen years that the only way in which his study affected me was as a botched-up piece of journalism by someone who had not only no capacity for examining James's novels critically but who had not even read them with ordinary care and intelligence. Though Mr. Connolly attacks the classical culture of Eton as ' by nature sterile ' and though he protests against the College literary values of his time—the Victorian Romantic and the facetious in verse, Pre-Raphaelite prose—he does not think of questioning the social foundation of the world of letters. He ends his case-history: ' Since I was unable to write in any living language when I left Eton I was already on the way to being a critic. My ambition was to be a poet, but I could not succeed when poetry was immersed in the Georgian or neo-Tennysonian tradition . . . I was however well grounded enough to become a critic, and drifted into it through unemployability.' He does not apparently think this a criticism of the state of our literary journalism. But this does explain what has always puzzled some of us. Contemplating the literary reviewing we cannot help wondering how it is that these reviewers, who

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know all the literary figures of their world, have had the most expensive education, and are not so overworked that they have no time to think if they wanted to, are not only unable to make first-hand judgments but also completely ignorant of informed opinion. Where did Mr. A get his reputation for brilliant wit, how is it that B's stuff is counted devastating satire, why does Miss C get respectful reviews, on what grounds could anyone assert Mrs. D's latest novel is worth serious attention? are questions that regularly recur to many readers of our literary weeklies, monthlies and even quarterlies. Mr. Connolly early on in his book observes: 'Critics in England do not accept bribes, but they discover one day that in a sense their whole life is an accepted bribe, a fabric of compromises based on personal relationships.' Sir Edward Marsh is incapable of such a reflection, but even as aware a man as Mr. Connolly does not seem able to see its full implications for literary criticism. He tells us how when he and his Eton set were faced with leaving College for the University the prospect seemed 'exhilarating and cosy, for, subject to a little permutation, the sentimental friendships from College continued unabated with undergraduates from other schools forming an audience, who, at a pinch, would contribute new blood to the cast.' A parable of the structure of our little world of letters. Skip a step and you see how it is that these elegant unemployables get into the higher journalism, and even the academic world, and how reputations are made—you have only to get the right people, whom you already know or can get introductions to, to write the right kind of thing about you in the right places. The odious spoilt little boys of Mr. Connolly's and so many others writers' schooldays—their education surely no less strange than that of the Nazi aristocracy as described by Erika Mann in *School for Barbarians*—move in a body up to the universities to become inane pretentious young men, and, still essentially unchanged, from there move into the literary quarters vacated by the last batch of their kind. Rupert Brooke in 1906 at Cambridge 'was in the set which filled the place that mine had held when I was "up"' writes Sir Edward. Mr. Connolly and his set expected to succeed Rupert Brooke's, and are now seeing to it that the literary preserves are kept exclusively for their friends. We who are in the habit of asking how such evidently unqualified reviewers as fill the literary weeklies ever got into the profession

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need ask no longer. They turn out to have been ' the most fashionable boy in the school,' or to have had a feline charm or a sensual mouth and long eye-lashes. And in the creative field the same process is seen at work. The Oxford group moved naturally into the place left by Sir Edward's Georgians, to create the latest poetic renaissance, almost straight from school, and having no critical standards to reckon with, as we have seen, they have remained what they were at school. Hence Mr. MacNeice's account of his friends and their work reads like a book written by a schoolboy for schoolboys. ' Going to Germany soon after leaving Oxford, Auden took readily to post-War Germany's intellectual curiosity and spirit of heroic or idyllic Kameradschaft. He admires the cinema's unrivalled capacity for rapportage ; Auden has always believed that a good writer must be first a good reporter. His poetry is obviously conditioned by his background and experiences, and also by his not unfriendly contempt for the female sex, whom he regards as still precluded from civilization by circumstances.' It is no use looking for growth or development or any addition to literature in such an adolescent hot-house. The one literary artist of serious performance, vitality and worth in the period covered by Sir Edward and Mr. Connolly was D. H. Lawrence. He imports the only jarring note into the former's memoirs, otherwise so happily studded with affectionate anecdotes of the best people in society and the arts. Lawrence is reported to have said that Eddie Marsh ought to have his bottom kicked (for his impudence in telling Lawrence that his poetry didn't scan—see the Lawrence *Letters*). Eddie records it serenely, for Lawrence was an outsider. The tone taken by the literary reviews at the time Lawrence required obituary notices is a testimonial to the success of the public-school-University hold over literary criticism. No one who ever read Lord David Cecil, for instance, on Lawrence can fail to appreciate that the achieved reputation of an outsider was felt as a personal insult by the people who run our literary world. Order is revealed among a chaotic puzzle of memories: we read in the paper that two young men are the likely candidates for the something literary prize or poetry medal, one being sponsored by Sir Edward Marsh and one by some other bigwig—neither would be sponsored by the literary critic ; we could never before account for Mr. Connolly's write-up of Naomi

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Mitchison's embarrassing bestseller *We Have Been Warned* ; Sir Edward himself tells us how he was asked by the authorities whether Henry James ought to be given the Order of Merit, and instructed to find out whether Joyce ought to be given a Civil List Grant. Henry James got his O.M. on his death-bed after some trouble, but suppose it had been Lawrence (D. H.) or someone as unconventional and society-shunning as Walt Whitman? The gulf between disinterested opinion on contemporary literature and fashionable esteem is for a variety of reasons deplorable.

Mention of Walt Whitman brings us to the other book listed here, the memoirs of Logan Pearsall Smith. Mr. Smith was an American Quaker in the distant days before he settled down to become an English littérateur. Unlike Henry James and Mr. T. S. Eliot he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, or more precisely the Paterian tradition of fine writing and the English social tradition of letters. The earlier parts of his book are good reading, for his origin provided him with a point of view and a fruitful background. His reminiscence of Walt Whitman is something that no one else in this galley could have been capable of setting down, and his criticism of the Balliol ethos of his time is correspondingly refreshing. But that was long ago. He is now as convinced as Eddie Marsh that modern poetry and modern prose are no good, and as sure as Rupert Brooke that style means decoration and stilts. 'This draught of Shakespeare's brewing—the potent wine that came to fill the great jewelled cup of words he fashioned,' he writes, and even in unimpassioned argument: 'There are two main methods of attaining excellence in writing, two ways of attempting to reach the peaks of Parnassus.' Responsibility for failure to develop his initial endowment must lie with the company he kept, which though it has always reviewed with extravagant praise his literary criticism and his creative efforts will never convince posterity that the *Trivia* are not boring or the monograph on Shakespeare not empty fine writing. The advantages Americans enjoy in having no Public School system, no ancient universities and no tradition of a closed literary society run on Civil Service lines, can hardly be exaggerated.

Q. D. LEAVIS.

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THE CENTRAL ALL-CONNECTING STUDY

INTERPRETATION IN TEACHING, by I. A. Richards (Kegan Paul, 18/-).

This book repeats and develops in greater detail the main arguments of *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, and, consequently, is open to the same general criticisms as were passed on that book in a previous number. Indeed, looking back on the ' œuvre ' of Dr. Richards, one can now detect certain common features which appear with varying prominence in almost all his books. Most striking are their extravagant pretensions, the air of being about to announce some staggering advance, combined with the failure to promote directly the business of criticism. Their most praiseworthy qualities, none the less useful for being negative, are the vigour with such rubbishy misconceptions that have cluttered up a subject for generations are finally swept away, and the exhilaration thus imparted to the reader in being given the feeling of making a fresh start. There is, however, a marked change in direction noticeable in his recent books. Whereas (notably in *Principles of Literary Criticism*) Dr. Richards was attempting to clear the way for criticism and to release the powers of poetry, his hopes for our salvation rest now on the study of Interpretation.

Dr. Richards approaches his task with optimism undimmed. ' The argument,' he writes in the preface to this book, ' from time to time looks forward to the general achievement—in a perhaps not very distant future—of levels of intelligence in interpretation higher than those yet reached.' And of the scope of this study of interpretation he writes, ' a deeper and more thorough study of our use of words is at every point a study of our ways of living. It touches all the modes of interpretative activity—in technique and in social intercourse—upon which civilizations depends.' But a characteristic ambiguity runs through the book. At one point he appears to be claiming that he has led us to the very threshold of revelation and that one step more will take up into the heart of the mystery, at the next we are whisked away to the perimeter where Dr. Richards is all modesty and self-depreciation. In treating of logic we are clearly in the realm of the tentative. ' What I am noting down here are, at best, only the materials of a possible teaching subject.' But later on he seems by implication to be

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claiming the possession of considerable insight. ' With a well-managed circulation of a selection from the protocols I believe a class could in a few hours be given an insight into some extremely important matters involving every aspect of their practical conduct as well as their abstractive intellectual range.'

If we could ignore the claims put forward for the study of interpretation, the incessant beating of the drum outside the tent-flap, raising expectations which are never satisfied, and pass over the challenging asides with which the book is liberally sprinkled (Dr. Richards is still conducting his private sharp-shooting war with Philosophy) there is much in the book which is of positive, though limited value. On the subject ' words and their ways ' a small volume could be extracted with profit. Extremely suggestive, for example, is the classification of the meanings of ' definite.' The approach to the difficulties of metaphor is helpful in a negative way. The intricacies of the word ' is ' here unravelled do undoubtedly raise difficulties at all stages of education. In short, Dr. Richards' suggestions for a revised Rhetoric, Grammar and Logic might be introduced into schools as a valuable subsidiary subject.

But this would not do for Dr. Richards. Interpretation for him is ' the central all-connecting study,' and his book stands or falls by the success of this contention. Yet so great is his confidence in the strength of this claim, he does not bother to meet the objections which naturally occur to the reader concerned for the reorientation (to say no more) of education. Instead he proceeds directly ' under the kindly stimulus of the General Education Board ' and offers this book (' written for teachers ') ' as a Statement in the Application of the Theory of Interpretation to General Education.' It is a bulky work very uneven in value, and it gains some of its bulk from the inclusion of protocols garnered in a course of lectures delivered in 1935 in Cambridge. However useful they may have been in helping Dr. Richards to formulate his positions, they are not, it seems to me, really necessary to his exposition, an exposition intended for teachers. Unless (and one is seriously tempted to take it so) they were required as pegs on which to hang numerous homilies, intricate analyses, tips on education, some inspired, some trite, and far too many asides whose unfortunate tone is illustrated by the following:

> ' Alas! Poor Plato and all his progeny! How little of that elementary apparatus of clear and useful distinctions which you

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introduced and have handed on, that apparatus upon which the whole weight of Western Culture has ever since been carried—no metaphysical abstruseness but the handy daily instruments of intelligence—how little of all this has reached—I won't say the ordinary reader—let me rather say the average reader of *The Criterion* and *The New Republic*.'

However difficult it may be (and as will be mentioned shortly there are special reasons for the difficulty) the main contention of *Interpretation in Teaching* calls for at least a short answer. Dr. Richards' imposing reputation gives weight to a view which if taken strictly is at once false and misleading. While recognizing ' how central the fact of language is ' we must equally insist that a study of how it works must always be subordinate to the training in sensibility which will enable us to understand and use it. The study of language for its own sake is not only not enough, it may become a distraction, heading away from the central purposes of education.

How far this distinction needs to be pressed, and how far this book errs in neglecting it are points difficult to determine, for Dr. Richards is extremely able in appearing to get rid of criticism by forestalling it. For example, he says that all he wishes to develop is the ' ability to see the point in the actual.' He would dismiss his study ' if it pretends to set itself up as a rival to the general practice of understanding, and distracts the student from his work—which is to interpret, not to discourse on interpretation.' He speaks of the risk he runs in adding ' encumbering machinery, useful perhaps in dissection, but not in forwarding the growth of controlled awareness.' Yet the tenour of the book runs against these very explicit reminders and reveals them to be merely gestures. Though assembled here they seem to cut the ground from under the critic, they do not in fact remove the doubts and dissatisfaction which must strike the teacher concerned for General Education. Dr. Richards will no doubt ' come out into the open ' more clearly when he develops his study in future works. Meanwhile, though it would be unfair to point to the recent book by Stuart Chase as a good example of the dangers of his influence, something of the misleading spirit of his approach can be seen in that in many ways excellent work, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*.

H. A. MASON.

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THE METHOD AND THEORY OF THE BAUHAUS

THE NEW VISION, by L. Moholy-Nagy (Faber and Faber, 16/-).

In 1933 the National Socialist Government in Germany closed the Bauhaus, to mark its distaste for a method of education which was designed to train its pupils in self-knowledge, direct observation, and the full expression of their creative abilities. The school is now in Chicago, with its director L. Moholy-Nagy. A record of its first year's work there and an account of the Bauhaus ideas and methods are available in English in *The New Vision*. Both are of extreme interest. The Bauhaus students are made aware that design is an expression of the whole man, not a specialized talent which can be developed by learning to apply accepted rules. Their training keeps alive in them the sensitiveness to experience, the spontanecus creative instinct, of the child. It relates these qualities to actual living and working conditions of society, so that the powers and energies released in the individual can be made to serve our common need to use and be surrounded by fully satisfying things. The exercise of the pupil's senses goes along with rigorous workshop training in wood, metal, glass, plastics, and other materials ; in the handling of tools and machines ; modelling ; analytical, life, and geometrical drawing ; instruction in mathematics and science (which includes biology). From the Bauhaus, students go out as designers and craftsmen (hand and machine) able to place a superb technical equipment at the service of the community and at the service of their own genuine and unforced creative abilities. In measure as they are able to influence industrial production they can reshape the daily life of society.

There is no question of the value of the Bauhaus experiment. Its insistence on the education of the student along the lines of his biological functions,' and its view of society as an organism with biological needs, are corrective of the fatal imbalance of society at present, in which deep biological needs and impulses are everywhere denied. There are few and fewer whole men : there are brain workers and novelists ; ' hands,' mouths (useless, useful) ; uniformed or only registered units. Technical progress, the

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potentialities of the machine, are degraded to produce ill-designed and shoddy things for ' the market.' For man, for the satisfaction of his vital instincts, less and less. With the simple malice of the savage, man is arranging to die out by becoming childless.

Its value admitted, the Bauhaus method must be watched for unnatural vices fathered by its heroism (let Mr. Eliot forgive this). Admirable exercises in the surface treatment of materials—the study illustrated on p. 50 of Moholy-Nagy's book shows the line running straight from the child's acute imaginative pleasure in the surface of a worn old table. The ' surface treatment poem ' by Marinetti (p. 67) is only tedious and silly—the unintelligent application of a method. Strips of different woods, and the separate letters of words, or words, are not susceptible to the same treatment. Failure to make the distinction shows up a flaw in discrimination and in the training of discrimination. This simple instance puts one on guard against accepting blindly, out of gratitude, every conclusion drawn by Moholy-Nagy. In his account of Picasso he emphasizes this painter's obedience to the ' values of the material ' in which he works. This conscious obedience, a necessary element in the release of a new impulse in art, could become itself a bondage ; it could become that domination by *things*, that shifting of the centre of value from man to things, which marks the death of our society. Picasso runs this risk of dying of the excess of his virtues ; there is a still life here and a relief there which were dead at birth. Moholy-Nagy does, indeed, note that the next step beyond composing a still life of pieces of board nailed on would be to leave them lying on the table. The picture disappears. He does not note that even before the penultimate stage is reached a disintegration has begun which attacks (like a death-watch beetle) that deep instinct for integration of which the Gestalt psychology has provided so much non-mystical evidence. The work of the cubists has (as every object and process has) two aspects, two energies—as a human being dies while he lives. It is a necessary and consciously-directed assault on a dead form. And it is an unconscious submission to those forces in society which have brought it about that things have a greater value than man. I think this paradox has not yet been noticed.

To return to an earlier stage in Picasso's journey—in the pencil drawing of a table (1910) he has abandoned three-dimensional

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space representation of the object. The things on the table appear flat, without modelling. Now, it is likely that the child sees things flat, in two dimensions, and later builds them up by touch into three, and by a further effort (or distortion) into four (space-time). Picasso is making the effort to *see* again from the beginning—as an absolutely necessary preparation for a new creation. A departure on what line? (The word distorts the sense: human experience, like the universe, is a continuum; one simply departs). The Harlequin with Guitar (1924) suggests the attempt to experience in painting, and to express, certain effects of music. The experience may have had the complexity of music; its expression by the use of paint does not convey its complexity: the subtleties, and the motivating intention, of the musician are not those of the painter and the attempt to express them in paint destroys them. A departure has come to an end in no-man's-land. In other pictures he tries, presenting a view from above, from the side, by cross-section, to achieve that simultaneity of sense experience which music can achieve with the greatest economy and precision: this method of a painter is less economical and infinitely clumsier. In a list he compiles of the means employed by cubism Moholy-Nagy gives the term 'pluralism' to the method by which a contour suggests several objects. Here the proper comparison is with ambiguity in language, in which the more economical means are the more suggestive.

Possibly Picasso has felt the dangers involved in these excursions towards literature and music. In Guernica (reproductions of this picture are becoming as common to modern mantelpieces as that painting of Persephone floating out of hell was common to the Leeds landladies of my youth) he has turned back to the method of analysis he was using before the War. In the earlier paintings the interest, the excitement, sprang from the fresh and complex arrangement of the dismembered parts. In Guernica there is a smell of synthetic emotion.

Picasso stopped short of leaving his objects lying about unpainted—a natural weakness in a man who knows he can paint. The method of 'light painting' enthusiastically described by Moholy-Nagy is taking another way to get rid of the picture. It achieves a step beyond the elimination of the associations of natural objects by eliminating a special object—the pigment itself.

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' Present-day efforts are tending to subordinate even paint (pigment), or at least to sublimate it . . . on polished surfaces, metal, synthetic materials, etc., there is sprayed very thin, iridescent, flowing layers of paint, to which the reflecting layer underneath gives an ethereal fluctuating appearance. The reflections and refractions bring the surroundings into the picture surface.' The picture begins to disappear into its background, and when Malewitch produced a plain white surface with a small white square painted on it he was merely removing every obstacle to the play of light. Another development is the use of pliable and perforated plastic sheets (glass-like) with spot-lights and needle lamps to form a continuously changing ' picture.' Moholy-Nagy suggests that, technically, the picture painted by hand ' is surpassed by the purer " pictorial " light production.' The less heroic critic, recalling that ' Unnatural vices Are fathered by our heroism,' adds yet another to the proofs (lying thick at every level of human activity) that efforts to attain the Absolute negate themselves at such and such a stage, and tumble us into the void. Moholy-Nagy's heroic hegelianism deserved better of the State that exiled him.

The director of a discipline founded in biological processes, he is able to approve of the supersession of the painter's hand by what he himself terms ' mechanical methods.' In this term he is not wholly just to his conception. The mechanical methods are still directed by the painter's impulse, which uses electricity and light projection instead of pigment applied by hand. But—the total divorce of the instinctual-intellectual impulse from the discipline of the hand severs, I am sure, a vital nerve. The process changes its nature: a channel which led back to the biological function is cut off: the activity which continues will become more and more arid, nearer to ' pure ' ideation. The Waste Land has been reached again by a different route.

Salvation will then be found (I dare say) in requiring, discovering, a certain contempt for technical resources, and in a less intoxicated attitude to ideas.

Moholy-Nagy's treatment of spatial relations—in painting, sculpture, architecture—is stimulating, and sometimes superficial. He has not noticed that architecture has a closer relation to music than to sculpture: it touches conceptions of time more nearly than those of space. In listening to music we enter a closed (finite)

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world created by time according to its own laws. The relation between our senses and the music is a relation in which time produces both causes and effects. The analogy with architecture is clear ; there is a timing between the parts of a well-proportioned building which is the source of our satisfaction in it. The art that works most clearly in purely spatial relations is sculpture, which is thus farther from music than either painting or literature. These last are the expression of space-time relations, and in each of them a proper respect for the material—surfaces, words—should decide the form the artist uses for his purpose. His purpose? To evoke, *with as little loss as possible*, the experience that has taken place in him and can be described as the crystallization, or dissolving into one, of a great many sensations and feelings. The greater artist can realize in a single experience many feelings and sensations, the lesser only a few. A too devout and enthusiastic submission to the nature of materials (from wood to light) drains off energy from the deeper (and largely unconscious) creative function, the *organization* of sensations and feelings into one complex impulse. Moreover, not merely the nature of the material, but the nature of the artist's intention must be respected. The use, as by the surrealist painters, of what one can only call a literary intention, produces a thin-blooded and over-simplified hybrid. At some stage in the unconscious process of organization a conscious motive which would have been at home in the mind of a novelist has entered. The feeling is thus diffused and distorted. What does not run away is then rather self-consciously arranged at a more superficial level. The anecdotal intention of some surrealist paintings is barely disguised by subjecting the anecdote to ' surface treatment.'

This is not to under-praise the value of the Bauhaus emphasis on a respect for material. It is to say that a balance must be struck between observation of material and observation of feeling. The painter Mondrian, ' one of the most valuable painters of our generation,' by what Moholy-Nagy calls ' his puritan approach,' ruthlessly sacrifices complexity of expression. Which has then to be put back into his work (as into the work of some other painters and sculptors) by critics no less distinguished and honest than Mr. Herbert Read. This is as though, finding the child missing from the bath, you reverently put in it his school report. It is not that there is no ' meaning ' (the common and foolish charge)

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in cubism, constructivism, and the rest. The meaning has shifted to the 'dematerialized and highly intellectualized formula.' Emotional significance has then to be added by the enthusiastic theoretician bringing in his purely literary emotion to redress the balance. Lissitzsky, with a greater intellectual rigour and energy than Mondrian, produces very pleasing ideal constructions, which probably correspond with reasonable accuracy to a physical sensation, some apprehension of the nervous or cell structure of the brain. The paraboloid sculpture of Joost Schmidt may originate in a like physical impulse.

The immense pleasure a child feels in shaping and polishing a piece of wood or a stone which has suggested to him some form, or simply fits satisfactorily his hand, is rooted in a primitive bodily impulse that can be elaborated by a Zande into the wood sculptures described by Richard Wyndham, by the T'ang artisans, by a Barlach, a Maillol. The auto-erotic element in certain of Brancusi's sculpture becomes tedious unless one is prepared to enjoy endlessly the hypnotic pleasures of the child. The problem surely is one of fluidity—at what point to arrest the fluidity of the material to give the fullest possible effect of continuity in space (a 'feeling' which is the complement, and the other side, the outside, of the feeling of existence within the time structure of music) before the sculpture, like the painting, disappears. In the 'equipoised sculpture' of the Bauhaus students the border-line has been straddled. In the further stage, which Moholy-Nagy terms 'kinetic equipoise'—the production, by the movement of contours, rods, rings by electricity or other power, of 'virtual volume'—the sculpture has disappeared. Virtual volume can be produced by the revolving lights of a merry-go-round, by an upright wire swayed by a watch spring, by the lights of passing motor-cars. (The reproduction of the virtual volume of these phenomena in photographs satisfied, perhaps—perhaps unconsciously?—a certain weak need for permanence). The deep impulse in kinetic sculpture is, again, the wish to achieve through it some of the (primarily emotional) satisfactions of music. It is, you may say, an adulteration of space with time—which is not an approach to the conception space-time. And once again, the attempt is largely a failure because the material is hopelessly refractory to this use of it ; the expression actually achieved is tenuous to a degree.

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What a lamentable thing Gaudier-Brezska's death was. That quality of stability and proportion he shares with Rimbaud, unshakeable, as though he had roots meeting at the core of the world, would have allowed him to push fluidity to its extreme limit without the danger of the sculpture disappearing under his intelligence. The curious timidity in the work of Archipenko, Lipchitz, Henry Moore, Arp, Barbara Hepworth, and some other modern sculptors, suggests that they are unconsciously nervous when faced by the basic problem of fluidity.

Moholy-Nagy's own elaborate piece of kinetic sculpture, an apparatus of slotted metal discs and sheets of glass and celluloid, is designed for the automatic projection of changing light effects. It is a charming and ingenious toy—one should not despise toys—and might have consoled the Chinese emperor for the breakdown of his mechanical nightingale: whether it could succour him when dying of *accidie* is another matter. The risk run by kinetic sculptors is the risk of rousing a resistance, a biologically necessary one, to sensory reactions. The frontiers of the Waste Land can be crossed at innumerable points. And one must suspect an enthusiasm so indiscriminate that it gives the term ' creative manipulation of light ' to sky-writing and ' projections on to clouds or other gaseous backgrounds through which one can walk, drive, fly,' and so naïve that it states solemnly, ' The illiterate of the future will be, we believe, the person who cannot photograph.'

The sculptor always has been faced by difficulties greater than those of the painter who has to provide himself with canvas and paints. When he must provide himself as well with the means of producing high-powered artificial light he is to be pitied, poor devil. So slavish a dependence on the power-station must make a cripple of him.

The elimination from sculpture of the feeling shared by the Azande and Maillol, and the making it a problem of the organization of relationships of volume, material, position, light, is actually the final stage in an astonishing development. Astonishing, because it turns a mental process inside out and leads back into architecture. These problems are basically problems of timing. Here, in architecture, and in stage settings, the study of them along Bauhaus lines could be of the greatest value. It should be pursued.

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Modern movements in art—in painting, sculpture, literature—have been worse served by their supporters than by their opponents. A vital impulse—which this was and is—survives misrepresentation and even neglect. It can be injured by indiscriminate acceptance. Moholy-Nagy's educational work has immense interest and value. The bases of his practice are sound—art is a function of the whole self or it is, however clever (amusing, brilliant, serious), a trick. Design is the active expression of the fully developed emotional and intellectual powers of the individual. An intensive study of materials sharpens the sense of touch (with all that that brings with it), and teaches the eye to serve fully the nerve centres of the brain. Valuable experiments are made. At a certain stage, the intellect, that spider, gets out of control and begins to weave a tissue which becomes more and more a 'dematerialized and highly intellectualized formula': equilibrium is overthrown, and what began as a biological function ends (and withers) in—to borrow from Mr. Eliot again—'merely vans to beat the air, The air which is now thoroughly small and dry, Smaller and dryer than the will.'

A younger growth of painters and sculptors is already profiting as much by the excesses as by the virtues of the experimenters. It is surely safe, and it is certainly time, to talk dispassionately.

STORM JAMESON.

MR. C. S. LEWIS AND THE STATUS QUO

REHABILITATIONS AND OTHER ESSAYS, by C. S. Lewis (Oxford University Press, 7/6).

The rehabilitations in this volume consist of essays on Shelley and Morris and a dry-as-dust account of the rules for writing in alliterative metre; none of them is at all impressive, and in a short review it seems more important to concentrate on those essays in which Mr. Lewis defines his position as a lecturer and tutor in English literature. I wish to do this not merely because I disagree with Mr. Lewis's conclusions on these matters but because what seems to me a spurious quality in his thinking can here be defined most sharply. This quality is not generally recognized, and Mr. Lewis has already achieved a reputation as a don who can stand up to non-academic critics with more than their own weapons, as

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a scholar who is also a critic of literature, a controversialist with a style.

Reviewing *Seventeenth-Century Studies* in these pages (June, 1938) I commented on the controversial methods employed by Mr. Lewis in his essay on Donne. Some of the same tricks appear in the present book. There is, for example, the trick of disparaging unnamed opponents who remain conveniently vague—' our modern impostors,' ' the new Puritanism,' ' some of Mr. Eliot's weaker disciples ' ; and there is at times the same irritating tone of superiority. But it is in other ways that Mr. Lewis makes rational discussion of his central themes so difficult. In ' The Idea of an " English School," ' for example, discussion is confined from the start to a field from which all awkward fundamental questions are arbitrarily excluded, and the reader may not at first observe that the apparently careful and impartial logic is functioning solely in relation to questions which are at most of secondary interest. Blandly assuming that the very first question to be asked is whether or not the university English curriculum should include Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, Mr. Lewis proceeds to discuss this question in terms of ' origins ' and ' influences,' and the essay soon resolves itself into a debate concerning the respective claims of the Classics and of early English writings to be considered as the source of our later literature. Early English wins: ' If, then, we are concerned with origins, Anglo-Saxon must keep its place in any English syllabus.' Safely blinkered in the opening pages the docile reader may find the conclusion fairly reached.

If, however, the reader refuses to be blinkered ; if he believes that ' the idea of an English School ' must bear some relation to problems of individual insight and development, and that an essay with so lofty a title should have something to say concerning the human ends in view, then he will find himself discussing very different questions from those that Mr. Lewis propounds, and he will require something more specific than the abstractions ' unity and continuity ' (p. 74) to convince him of the necessity of Anglo-Saxon.

The paper that follows, on ' Our English Syllabus ' (*sc.* at Oxford), is a defence of ' learning ' as distinguished from vocational training on the one hand and ' education '—the special function

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of the schools—on the other. 'The university student is essentially a different person from the school pupil. He is not a candidate for humanity, he is, in theory, already human.' Dons and undergraduates, then, are partners in the pursuit of 'learning for its own sake,' and although learning may have some educational value, this is only a by-product, just as health is a by-product of games. 'Though you may have come here only to be educated,' the undergraduate is told, 'you will never receive that precise educational gift which a university has to give you unless you can at least *pretend*, so long as you are with us, that you are concerned not with education but with knowledge for its own sake. And we, on our part, can do very little for you if we aim directly at your education . . . We are not going to try to improve you ; we have fulfilled our whole function if we help you to *see* some given tract of reality.' The alternative to turning the undergraduate loose on a 'given tract of reality' is, it seems, to offer him a composite syllabus—'a little philosophy, a little politics, a little economics, a little science, a little literature' ; and the objection to 'the composite school' is that 'those little bits of various subjects are not found lying together in those quantities and in that order which the syllabus shows. They have been put together in that way artificially by a committee of professors.' After an excursion to prove that 'there is an intrinsic absurdity in making current literature a subject of academic study,' and that 'the student who wants a tutor's assistance in reading the works of his own contemporaries might as well ask for a nurse's assistance in blowing his own nose,' the paper reaches a fine manly conclusion: 'In the great rough country-side which we throw open to you, you can choose your own path. Here's your gun, your spade, your fishing-tackle ; go and get yourself a dinner.'

This essay, it is true, offers something more substantial for discussion than its predecessor. But I think that Mr. Lewis, who here states his case in such a way that disagreement seems at once to involve absurdities, wants to browbeat rather than to discuss. Some of the quotations I have given illustrate his disarming use of the false antithesis. If your experience leads you to believe that there is no great gulf between the sixth-form boy and the first-year undergraduate, then you are safely labelled as a meddlesome pedagogue bent on 'improving' your pupils. (This isn't

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really a knock-out, since Mr. Lewis's conception of ' education '—a process in which the master is an ' agent ' or ' operator ' and the pupil a ' patient '—is so obviously silly). If you think that there is some place in a university English course for the discussion of modern literature (heaven forbid it should be ' a subject of academic study '!) you are no better than a nose-blowing nurse. Worst of all, if you disagree with Mr. Lewis's main contentions you are one of the lily-livered, afraid to look on ' reality in the raw ' (p. 89).

It is in such ways that Mr. Lewis buttresses his argument in favour of specialization. To offer criticism of the kind of specialization exemplified in the Oxford English School is, he implies, to commit oneself to those ' little bits of various subjects,' to arbitrary selection, to ' propaganda.' It seems to me that cutting off a hundred or two hundred years from this end of English literature and ignoring the history of the English people, social, economic and intellectual (pp. 91-92), is a pretty arbitrary selection to start with. But even more serious is Mr. Lewis's complete inability to envisage any point of view other than his own except in the most ludicrous forms. I do not know what he would say to those who claim that some insight into ' reality ' can be gained from the study of a particular culture as a whole—of literature and its social and extra-literary relations—even if, in an English course, that study must *begin* from English literature. Nor do I know what he would say to those who, unashamedly seeking to educate their pupils as well as themselves, direct their efforts to the development of genuinely individual taste and critical intelligence, to the sharpening of tools that can be used outside any limits that the teacher may impose. But certainly those who are accustomed to thinking in such terms are not likely to find ' learning for its own sake ' a very substantial positive. What ' learning for its own sake ' is likely to mean in practice is simply useless learning—the study of origins, forms and influences.

In the essay on ' High and Low Brows ' there is a similar blurring of the issues. The possibility of distinguishing between literature (' Good Books ') and what can be roughly classified as entertainment literature (' Books ')—a distinction which Mr. Lewis denies—raises some interesting questions ; but the reader who hopes for clarification will be disappointed. There is no space to follow

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the hops, skips and jumps of the argument, and I can only register the suspicion that Mr. Lewis is less interested in his topic than in finding excuses for an attitude. 'Beware how you scorn the best sellers of to-day; they may be classics for the intelligentsia of the Twenty-Third Century. If our age is known to posterity not as that of Eliot and Auden but as that of Buchan and Wodehouse (and stranger things have come to pass), Buchan and Wodehouse will then be B's (*i.e.*, Good Books) and little boys will get good marks for reading them.' That is very comforting; and I think it explains some part of Mr. Lewis's reputation. With his learning and ingenuity he brings much needed support to those who wish to be confirmed in certain complacent attitudes, who combine a distaste for 'highbrow' literature with an aversion from radical enquiries concerning the academic *status quo*.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

ARNOLD'S THOUGHT

MATTHEW ARNOLD, by Lionel Trilling (George Allen and Unwin, 15/-).

This is a disappointing book—disappointing because its intention is clearly so admirable. There is nothing Stracheyan about Mr. Trilling's approach to his subject; he admires Arnold, has studied him closely and scrupulously, and sets to work with disinterested ardour and industry to bring out and define the nature of Arnold's peculiar distinction. This is a very difficult undertaking, as Mr. Trilling's book (and I say this partly as a compliment) makes us very much aware. He also makes us aware that he knows that an adequate approach must be free from the limitations we associate with academic writing. But his very concern (a common one in the academic world nowadays) to show an unacademic openness to the best that is thought and known in our time exposes certain disabling limitations very plainly to our view: he has extremely generous notions as to the range of authorities and witnesses worth citing in support of his argument, and this generosity is of the kind that goes with a lack of any notable vigour of first-hand thinking. It will perhaps be enough to say here that he finds Miss Sitwell's opinions worth respectful consideration, and that he seems not to doubt our recognition of Mr. Aldous Huxley as an intellect of a high order.

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It seems to me an associated deficiency that enables Mr. Trilling to accept Arnold as a great poet. At any rate, I think that the evaluation of Arnold as a thinker is a task to which no intelligence that cannot manifest itself in critical perception where poetry is concerned is likely to be adequate. Mr. Trilling's theme in the earlier part of his book is Arnold's attempt to save his creative gift from

this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears

to which it ultimately succumbed—to protect it behind a front of dandyism that should prevent his being drawn into the inhibiting preoccupations represented by the earnest Clough:

> ' Misunderstood, hiding behind a mask of irresponsibility, Arnold is free to cultivate that internal, meditative, slowly-precipitating part of himself which is to produce poetry. He is free from the questioning moralism and the restless intellectual drive of Rugby and Oxford . . . behind the high wall of his mockery.'

At the same time we are to see Arnold the poet as the T. S. Eliot of his age, crystallizing its finer consciousness—registering its peculiar strains, sensitivenesses and apprehensions—in a poetry that may be regarded as analogous in significance to Mr. Eliot's. Mr. Trilling doesn't, indeed, make the comparison ; in fact, he cites with approval Mr. Eliot's remark that Arnold's poetry is academic. But it is characteristic of Mr. Trilling's book that it should nevertheless convey the major valuation of Arnold as poet suggested above. Actually, of course, the mention of Mr. Eliot introduces a criterion that disposes of the claim for Arnold, whom the ' academic ' fairly places (though I can't agree with Mr. Eliot that the same weaknesses which ' make Arnold an academic poet make him an academic critic ').

Arnold's poetry is academic in that, for all its individual quality and the uncommon distinction of taste it presents, its virtues are of the same kind that appeal to the awarders of university prizes ; it has nothing essentially more vital to offer—nothing disturbing to the habits of those who know what poetry is. Arnold's use of words is not (if the discrimination may be made in this way) poetic but poetical ; it doesn't show us a strongly individual sensibility commanding words from below and compelling them into organizations

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of fresh and intense vitality. If his effects appear to be poetic it is almost wholly because of the work done by other poets, and not because of any profound response in Arnold to his own time. His habit and approach are essentially non-poetic. His themes are thought, felt and written—with lucidity—about ; theme and poetry remain separate—it would be quite appropriate, in appraising Arnold, to talk of ' subject ' and ' treatment.' The theme could be fairly discussed in paraphrase, for it would lose no substance or significance ; the poetry is a matter of conventionally poetical phrasing ('still clutching the inviolable shade '), adjectives, mention of things of accepted poetical value (mountains, glens, moonlight), and the languidly wistful sentiment that seems to pervade the poem with uniform density or thinness. The originality of the technically original verse for which Arnold is noted is the originality of the same poet.

For full justice this account would, of course, need qualifying, but it is a fair enough reply to an estimate of Arnold as a poet of genius. The point about his poetry may be made by saying that no one could have divined from it the energy, originality and distinction of mind manifested in his prose.

But that having been said we are at once faced with the question, what kind of distinction can, then, be claimed for Arnold as a thinker? If Mr. Trilling helps us towards an answer it is by implicitly making the question so unavoidable. The Arnold we are shown is not only incapable of sustained cogency or coherence of thought; even when tackled locally, within limits that might be supposed to favour the display of his strength, he appears commonly to be unsusceptible of satisfactory paraphrase. Even though we have to judge that Mr. Trilling's deficiencies have plainly some part in this appearance, the book does nevertheless lead us to glance towards the conclusion that Arnold was not a thinker at all.

It is, however, impossible to rest in such a conclusion. We may be left feeling that some other word than ' thinker ' would fit Arnold more comfortably, but no concession can be allowed that denies Arnold remarkable distinction of intelligence. His dealings with religion have brought on him a severity of comment that few would undertake to defend him against, and his political thought, in its inconsistencies and its lack of outline and development, would seem to lay itself open to criticism hardly less destructive. Yet, when this

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is admitted, Arnold is not disposed of. By any criteria he has serious faults and weaknesses ; yet there is more than one kind of valuable thinking, and if his virtues are to be properly recognized it is important not to apply wrong criteria. It seems, then, to me that as a thinker about the problems of culture and society he exhibits qualities of much the same order as make him a notable literary critic.

If he was not a systematic thinker like Mill, nor was he a mere vaticinatory sage like Carlyle. He stood essentially for intelligence, and if one can imagine the virtues attended by less in the way of disadvantages than they actually were, nevertheless his peculiar application of intelligence had, it should be impossible to doubt, its peculiar virtues. And when one compares him with the other notabilities of the age that distinguished themselves in relation to the same problems, it does not became less plain that there may be an important function for an intelligence that, in its sensitive concern for the concrete, its perception of complexities, and its delicate responsiveness to actualities, is indifferent to theoretic rigour or completeness and does not mind incurring the charge of incapacity for strict thinking.

The problems that preoccupied him may be brought, as Mr. Trilling says, under the general head of ' disintegration.' In the confident hey-day of Progress Arnold insisted that he saw around him social and cultural decay and the threat of worse to come. He was not, of course, alone in this ; but he found no congenial company among the representative critics of the age. Newman's response to the nineteenth century was for Arnold out of the question, and, on the other hand, he had a strong distaste for Carlyle. For though he he didn't share (shall we say) John Bright's faith in democracy, he had no bent for anti-democratic fulminations and no tendency to look for salvation to the advent of a Führer. And moreover to assert and establish the authority of reason was very much Arnold's concern.

At this point it is in place to quote an interesting passage in which Mr. Trilling compares him with Mill:

> ' for both men the idea of the development of the full personality was precious and both looked to Periclean Athens as the ideal condition for it ; both had read Tocqueville and caught his

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fear that personal development would be prevented by democracy's dull sameness ; and finally, both shared a profound reliance upon reason. Here, however, Arnold and Mill part, for Mill so firmly believed in reason that he thought that nothing, apart from its exercise and free utterance, might be done to establish it. Arnold, on the other hand, believed so firmly in reason that he was certain that it justified the use of its antithesis, force, without which it was powerless.'

Arnold, that is, had a much more positive notion of society and the State than Mill.

' Mill's social theory is essentially an atomic one . . . In Arnold's more organic conception of society . . . .'

—It will be noticed that when Mr. Trilling comes to Arnold he doesn't repeat the word ' theory,' and it would, in fact, be misleading. For Arnold's writings will hardly be found to yield any satisfactory theoretical statement of his views. But, as has already been suggested, to admit that Arnold was not a systematic thinker is not to say that his writings don't represent an essential function of intelligence.

His was the age in which the *Times*, surveying, as Mr. Trilling reports it, the East End during a slump, could say:

' There is no one to blame for this, it is the result of Nature's simplest laws.'

To Arnold it was obvious that the notions of the nature of society and the views of the function of the State implied in this proposition were inadequate, and with untiring suppleness of attack and lifelong persistence he contended for his own very different convictions. Had his advocacy depended for its persuasiveness on convincing analysis, rigour of definition and the logical cogency of his argument he might as well have held his peace. When he said that the State should represent ' our higher selves ' he was not expounding or implying a metaphysical theory of the State, and the force of the phrase—if we grant it any force—depends not upon a logical context, but upon the kind of virtue that is exemplified here:

' Each section of the public has its own literary organ, and the mass of the public is without any suspicion that the value

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of these organs is relative to their being nearer a certain ideal centre of correct information, taste, and intelligence, or farther away from it. I have said that within certain limits, which any one who is likely to read this will have no difficulty in drawing for himself, my old adversary, the *Saturday Review*, may, on matters of literature and taste, be fairly enough regarded, relatively to the mass of newspapers which treat these matters, as a kind of organ of reason. But I remember once conversing with a company of Noncomformist admirers of some lecturer who had let off a great firework, which the *Saturday Review* said was all noise and false lights, and feeling my way as tenderly as I could about the effect of this unfavourable judgment upon those with whom I was conversing. " Oh," said one who was their spokesman, with the most tranquil air of conviction, " it is true that the *Saturday Review* abuses the lecture, but the *British Banner* . . . says that the *Saturday Review* is quite wrong." The speaker had evidently no notion that there was a scale of value for judgments on these topics, and that the judgments of the *Saturday Review* ranked high on this scale, and those of the *British Banner* low.'

The truth asserted by this passage is one that it would hardly have been profitable to try and demonstrate. Arnold's persuasiveness is a matter of reminding his public of what they know already ; his cogency is seen in the way in which he makes recognition, in the bearings and consequences immediately relevant to his purpose, unavoidable. His strength was that, though the problems to which he was addressing himself may be summed up under ' disintegration,' the process of disintegration hadn't gone so far that he couldn't invoke with effect the notion of an ' ideal centre of correct information, taste and intelligence,' and refer to a ' scale of value for judgments ' that made the appeal to the *British Banner* obviously provincial and absurd. He had in this respect a decided advantage over anyone who should undertake equivalent work to-day.

He describes his ruling preoccupation here:

' The master-thought by which my politics are governed is . . . this—the thought of the bad civilization of the English middle-class.'

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His advantage was that his classification of the country into Barbarians, Philistines and Populace was less adequate than he suggested: there was a large and influential public capable of appreciating it. To induce a better civilization upon the English middle-class appeared a not altogether unhopeful undertaking because, in spite of the 'disintegrating' progress—in spite of industrialism, *laissez-faire* and the march of science—the sense of what a civilization should be was as yet very far from extinguished. Arnold's essential effort was to focus and strengthen it, develop it into a lively consciousness and bring it to an adequate realization of the problem (and it was an effort as much towards realization within himself as directed outwards). Though we can imagine a better Arnold, one who should have had his virtues and less disability, the systematic thinker's preoccupation with consistency and precision could in any case hardly have gone with those virtues —the peculiar sensitive mobility of intelligence, the constantly fresh concern for a delicate apprehension of actualities, the lack of interest in merely theoretical conclusions and results.

It is in his writings about religion that his weaknesses and limitations appear at their most injurious. Nevertheless, if it must be confessed that these writings look impotently 'period' now, still that is not all there is to say. On the one hand, it is impossible to wish that Arnold had been able to ignore the religious problem. On the other hand, a theologically respectable Arnold could hardly have been that representative fine consciousness of his time it was his peculiar function to be. And when we are most inclined to feel the weakness of his writings about religion as discreditable and disqualifying, it is appropriate to recall the tribute that Hopkins paid him in rebuking Bridges:

> 'I have more reason than you for disagreeing with him and thinking him very wrong, but nevertheless, I am sure he is a rare genius and a great critic.'

Arnold's greatness (to accept Hopkins's valuation) was bound up with his readiness to expose his inadequacies, and to venture where he might not be qualified. He represents the unspecialized intelligence asserting its rights and duties in a modern industrializal civilization and devoting itself with courage to the problem of restoring the unity of culture. He saw that irreversible changes had

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occurred, and thought that certain consequences had to be recognized, and was not, in any case, opposed to change as such ; but his point of view was that of one who was intent on conserving a heritage that he felt to be in great danger of being lost. To the Liberals, on whom for the most part he turned his irony, he must sometimes have seemed a decided reactionary ; but he can never have seemed a safe man to the Tories. For an interesting example of that in him which exasperated his contemporaries as inconsistency the reader may be referred to Mr. Trilling's account of how, having offended the orthodox by his contention that the Church must come to terms with modern critical thought, Arnold opposed Bishop Colenso. And inconsistency it must be allowed to be ; though even in this instance there is a creditable aspect. For a wholly creditable illustration of his suppleness of mind, or whatever other term most favourably suggests the opposite of rigidity, there is the account of the American tour. He found much more to admire in America than one could have anticipated. In particular, he liked the absence of the English class-distinctions.

No one would suggest that Arnold solved any problems, and it cannot even be claimed for him that his thought left any matter advanced a stage, to be taken up by someone else. And if he could examine how it stands with his causes to-day, he would have to report that, with the big exception of education, things have for the most part got desperately worse—so that the exception looks like an irony. Should anyone conclude from that to Arnold's futility, there is, perhaps, no better reply than that, if we could have had an Arnold to-day, it would have been a matter for gratitude. Having no Arnold, what we enviously see him as standing for is the vigorous and influential existence of a cultivated and responsible public, repository of a liberal spirit and a humane tradition. Our thanks are due to Mr. Trilling for helping us to realize more fully this aspect of Arnold.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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THE FUNCTION OF SCIENCE

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF SCIENCE, by J. D. Bernal (*Routledge, 12/6*).

> ' Can we so concern ourselves with ultimate ends that they will determine how we shall use our means, or are we to continue giving all our attention to means so that they will shape our ends?' (Biaggini—*Education and Society*).

The term ' frustration ' has been used, amongst others, to indicate an aspect and even the main problem of the contemporary ' crisis ' (the word must be used, even though the reaction to it is increasingly numb). There is a sense in which the problem is one of frustration, but if it is used also to imply the barring of some well-conceived end, then such use may well be unfortunate. There are reasons for thinking that not only in general problems, but also in science—where it has had a more particular application —the trouble is more one of frustration from ends only vaguely, if at all, in view. Frustration in these circumstances may hardly be the suitable word, yet, when ends are sacrificed, or ignored, to the ritual of means, it is the less surprising that a state approximating to one of frustration should prevail.

The significance of science to-day makes it necessary to give full consideration to any sign of disease and when, as has been suggested, there is little doubt that this disease is also a reflection of more general troubles then some investigation seems to be the more necessary. Whilst science was once considered to be a universal blessing providing the means of permanent progress, there are now more than a few suggestions that many of the world's difficulties are in fact the result of ' progress ' and that science is proving to be not even a mixed blessing. The bulk of the criticism has been confined to the post-war period, and particularly to the last ten or twelve years. If at first it was mainly due to the criticism of a few laymen—and so largely ignored by scientists and passively accepted by the lay public—more recently there has been a rapidly increasingly uneasiness among the scientists themselves. Typical of the former was the suggestion of a suppression of research and its application (*e.g.*, the British Association Sermon, in 1927). Features of the confusion and changing attitudes of the scientists

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during the last few years are seen in an increasing number of books, essays and addresses, whilst more official attitudes appear in the concern of the British Association with the social relations of science and in the changing policy of the conservative columns of *Nature*.

The publication this year of Professor Bernal's *The Social Function of Science* provides a convenient opportunity at once for reviewing some of the problems and scientists' attitudes towards them, of examining some of the suggested solutions, and for attempting some assessment of this 'crisis' and its relations to other sides of life. At the same time the public of this quarterly may provide by its critically developed attitudes an opportunity for stating some points which might lead elsewhere to potential ambiguity.

Since in some ways this review may not be typical, it seems necessary before going further, to acknowledge the importance of the work which Professor Bernal has done. His survey of the difficulties and inconsistencies in research seems to be the best and most detailed available, whilst his propounding of a working scheme for solution of these problems shows an ability to comprehend at once the various fields of science (in spite of his disclaimer), and so many of their relations with life and society, which is encouraging in the face of the spreading specialization. If qualifications regarding the adequacy of this approach should be made later—for as well as solutions it provides apparent symptoms of disease—this is not to deny its value as far as it goes and, if it is necessary to make the point, one can but say that it is important that it should be read widely, not only by research workers, but also by the general reader. For the present purpose it provides some necessary evidence and also those additional points which make further discussion possible and even essential, and any criticism will in fact be a measure of its importance.

With rare exceptions it was not until the last war that there was any serious attempt to provide co-ordination of science. Then the immediate needs demanded both some degree of control and at least some proportion of 'state' research but, along with these, came also a chaos of authority and objective. From such foundations arose the post-war scientific and technical advances and these persisted until the social and economic 'crises' of recent

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years. 'With what appears to be a strange coincidence, the disturbing events of the Great War, the Russian revolution, the economic crisis, the rise of Fascism, and the preparation for newer and more terrible wars have been paralleled inside the field of science by the greatest changes in theory and in general outlook that it has undergone in the past three centuries.' The sudden impact of these various issues, in all of which they were more or less concerned, led a number of scientists to reconsider the bases of their beliefs and of their work. It will be clear that the result of such thoughts could hardly be satisfying. Along with the achievements of science, and to those who had any faith in it, its undoubted potentialities, there still exist and are likely to exist under present conditions 'War, financial chaos, voluntary destruction of goods which millions need, general under-nourishment, and the fear of still other wars more terrible than any before in history.' In distinction from the previous fiction of a 'pure' science, it became necessary to realize how integrally science had become a part of society—was in fact an important cause of change in society, developing in turn, however, apparently by accident, in response to the claims of society. Scientific research and teaching were small but critically important sections of industrial production. Science had become an institution—comparable with the Church—and one concerned with, and at present dependent upon, the making of profit. As such it was inevitable that it should be subject to the fluctuations of the financial system and to-day its chief means of expansion lie, apparently, along the channels of war research.

The main lines are clear. In association Professor Bernal sees the vicious circle of scientific instruction in school and university and the connected chaos of authority and objective in the leading academic and state institutions. These affect all too clearly the financing of research and the quality of the personnel. The problems are well known in one aspect or another—the effects of private endowment—lack of integration—specialization—bureaucracy—lack of freedom in research—and secrecy: various others will spring to mind and have their application to research both in the universities and in industry.

It is difficult to quarrel with this outline of the condition of science and the opposing tendencies which now strangle it. There is little doubt that it is the best presentation available, even though

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different people may wish to underline this or to qualify the weight attached to that feature. Even more important, however, are the solutions proposed, and here again, one cannot but admire the thoroughness with which so many of them have been worked out. The scientist in particular should find the concept of the organic laboratory, capable of growth, reproduction and *natural death*, well worthy of consideration, whilst the plans for solving the un-coordinated increase of publications offers great hope if only they could be adopted in time. Equally interesting to the scientist, but of even more obviously general concern, are the proposals regarding the re-organization of our past knowledge and future research, the financing of science, its correlation with industry, etc.: they contain the basis of a real solution to these immediate problems, in so far as they can be considered as isolated one from another. Yet characteristic of Professor Bernal's approach is a realization that matters cannot be solved piecemeal since they all are essentially connected with what are now termed social problems. He submits that under the present system it is not possible for science to function adequately since there are factors in the society which tend to nullify the efforts of scientists and to deny ultimately even their existence. The only workable solution must involve a change in society itself, and it is in fact part of his thesis that just as science is an integral process of society—it is a process of widening knowledge—and is necessarily conditioned by society, in return it also is a conditioning factor and during its own development is the cause of social change. He is clearly affected here by the logic of dialectical materialism which in this respect, at least, provides a point of view to which scientists, and biologists in particular, should not easily take objection. The whole course of science, in particular the biological sciences, for the last seventy years has tended to confirm the confidence with which Marx and Engels maintained their ideas of the processes of action and interaction, in place of the merely partial adequacy of the earlier concept of 'cause and effect.' Yet in view of this, and of his obvious leaning to the Marxian attitude, it seems the more remarkable that Professor Bernal hardly allows sufficient weight to the inter-relationships inherent in some other aspects.

He makes it clear that education (or its lack) in the young

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scientist is at the root of many of his problems, and some space is given to questions of science training in schools, the examination bugbear, the inadequacy of the university training, specialization and its dangers, and above all the vicious circle composed of teacher, scholar, student, lecturer, graduate, research and teaching. If some of this is rather on the lines of expected and almost orthodox criticism of contemporary methods, yet many essential points are gathered together. In solution we are offered a more thorough yet broader conception of science teaching in the schools. The place of science in social life is to be emphasized, the examination system to be revised to emphasize intelligence rather than memory, the value of experiment and practice is underlined, and the dangers of specialization are to be minimized. Along lines such as these it is hoped that not only will science develop more fully, but that in association there will come an appreciation of its needs and an understanding of its place in the social scheme, *i.e.*, of the needs it can satisfy.

There is reason to see here at once some of the weakness of Professor Bernal's arguments as well as part of their strength. Even more significant weakness is shown when dealing with the ends to which science, and the efforts to reorganize it, should be aimed—in other words, the social scheme in which it would have its place. These points seem the more worthy of criticism since the former usually finds a place in the proposed solutions of both scientists and others, whilst the latter (not so usually dealt with) is so integrally related to the other aspects of life and involves so clearly the ultimate test of the whole that it is essential that the two be discussed in association, and it is important to look more closely at the ends visualized. In doing so it will be well to remember that just as economic conditions (in the widest sense) helped to determine man, so he helped to determine them: also that whilst the pressure of such conditions is undeniable, yet ' bread and clothes ' are not enough, and their importance is measured by the ends in view.

Ends are discussed from time to time, and more particularly towards the end of the book. It is perhaps both characteristic and significant that they should be mixed with more immediate matters. Having reviewed the possible modifications of research largely from the point of view of science, Bernal goes on to consider science in the service of man. Needs are grouped in the following

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order: (1) food, shelter, health, *enjoyment* and the organization for providing them; (2) the recognition of and the satisfaction of new needs arising in the course of the growth of society and (3) 'Finally society takes cognizance of itself and at the same time expresses itself in what may be called its culture: in manners, art, and in the general attitude towards life. Here again not only operative science, but also the world picture which science presents, are essential factors.' It is not easy to find precise definition of the ends in view and, whilst one can realize and even sympathize with the difficulties, the small space and discussion given to them seem to be significant. The dangers of quoting out of the context are, I hope, realized, yet quotation seems necessary, both for precision and for fairness. On p. 379 'There are still large tasks for mankind to undertake—the ultimate conquest of space, of disease, and death, most of all their ways of living together.' In the following discussion, however, the importance of the last seems to be lost in the fascinating possibilities of the first. In writing of Science and Culture (dealt with in one page) we find, 'The present situation, where a highly developed science stands almost isolated from a traditional literary culture, is altogether anomalous and cannot last.' 'The dryness and austerity of science . . . is something which must be removed before science can fully take its place as a common framework of life and thought.' 'At the same time, history, tradition, literary form, and visual presentation will come more and more to belong to science.' The following quotation also, although not quite in the same context, seems relevant: 'we must, in the interests not only of humanity *but of science itself*, strive to secure such a system.' (my italics). Although the object, that of changing economic and political systems, may be received with sympathy, the stress here is not a happy one.

These remarks suggest, perhaps, some confusion of thought, and it seems essentially to be one of ends and means. It is likely that in Professor Bernal's mind there was a better realization of 'ends' than is explicitly stated here, that he was not quite so fully occupied with material means for existence and 'enjoyment' as his space distribution would suggest. Yet since the attitude and the emphasis is a reflection of those of several other writers, it becomes more important to make some qualifications regarding it. In reply Professor Bernal might say that he was not concerned

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with subjects outside science, that culture and the ends of life were incidental to his theme, yet in view of the far reaching nature of his survey and the nature of the method—the implicit acknowledgment of the integration within and between phenomena and knowledge—this must remain unlikely. It seems more likely that some of the problems have not been sufficiently realized, and some sections dealing with education appear to bear this out. In so far as we can isolate science from the rest of the education, so many of the suggested improvements are in themselves admirable. Yet is it entirely an unfortunate accident that the impression is given that a change in the attitude to science is, if not the only, then by far the most important change required? The question seems to be, not so much ' Where is science going?', but ' Is science an end in itself?'

Since it is necessary to go further than this, it may be useful to ask another question. It is not likely that Professor Bernal expected his book to be read only by scientists, yet if its value is to be assessed—as it must if it is to succeed in its purpose—it is necessary to inquire on what standards he would expect the educated reader to rely, what form of education could develop them and how far such an education is readily available? Further, can such standards be ignored by the scientist and, if not, how did—or could—he acquire them? Professor Bernal has himself drawn attention to the layman's difficulty in judging between the ' High Priests ' of science, and his suggestions for the general improvement of science training in education are intended, among other things, to resolve this. Yet we must still ask whether this is enough. The necessity of a scientific attitude is sufficiently obvious to prevent any suggestion that a change in training is not required. But there is still the need for an education providing criteria not merely for judging the qualities of research as such, but also ' from the realm of general intelligence, for determining which specialists can be trusted, and how far ' (*Scrutiny*, I, IV, p. 320). It may be suggested that ' good ' science and scientists will at once have the right aims and provide the education which would demand them, but unless by science is understood the ' summa ' of all knowledge and understanding—and this would appear to be begging all questions, or evading them—there still remains the most important object of education, training for living,

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an object to which science is ultimately subservient, and one which there is good reason to know is seldom sufficiently stressed. The point is a difficult one to make, although it is one which has been implicit in the general attitudes of this quarterly. Reference may also be made to *Education and Society* (Biaggini, particularly the last chapter). A particularly relevant comment has been made by Otis (*The New Frontier*, I, II, p. 20) in reference to Gasset on the Function of the University: 'The man of "culture" is the man who . . . is responsible for "civilization," and whose function is to govern or to assure the existence of government—that is the direction of society in terms of the "best" ideas of the time. The man of Science is the contributor of "new" ideas. He is not a professor, he is an investigator. He is not a teacher of what he has learned, but rather a discoverer of what he has never learned.' By this it must not be thought that society should be composed of those who merely discover the 'new,' and those who do not—we all find some signs of the new and all should, as members, be responsible for the direction of society. The danger lies rather in the risk that the new should be sought for its own sake. If it is suggested that there are such tendencies in this survey (and that they have also been shown by many other writers with similar objects in view), this is not meant to be a criticism of science itself, but rather of the motives with which it is applied. Admittedly there are so many sides of life providing obvious problems for solution that it is the easier, when faced with the immediate, to forget—or to avoid—consideration of the reasons for solving them. The possibility, however, that this can occur is itself the most serious sign of social disease, and, in view of its intimate relationship with all other sides of life, it seems to be one demanding much greater attention than it is usually given by both scientists and others.

Is it necessary to add—perhaps it is—that in order to maintain standards it is necessary to live? To modify Bernal's statement, 'we must, in the interests not only of humanity, but of culture itself, strive to secure such a system' that will permit the maintenance *and development* of living values. This can only be done with the aid of all the forces which can be arranged on the side of the real life, and of these science is perhaps one of the strongest. If 'isolation is the most obvious characteristic of the modern

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sensibility,' such a state is not, unfortunately, less representative of the scientist than of the artist. The critical minds of both fields are faced ultimately with the same difficulties, composing, as they do, ' the very small group of those who actually make " original " contributions ' to knowledge and understanding (B. Otis). The only reasonable hope of attaining ends either immediately desirable to us (or in the future to ' the men of the new society ') must lie in the provision of an education which shall provide a basis for communication between them and—is it not even more important?—shall provide an ' educated ' public (the rest of the world) which shall need and shall be able to understand the ideas of their age and without which those ideas, scientific or artistic, are useless.

C. E. LUCAS.

MR. ELIOT'S NEW PLAY

THE FAMILY REUNION, by T. S. Eliot (Faber and Faber, 7/6).

Mr. Eliot has disappointed us so many times during the last ten years, has abandoned so consistently the standards that he himself taught us to respect, that it is becoming increasingly difficult to approach a new book by him with the impartiality that is essential to literary criticism. No scrupulous critic can altogether avoid the feeling that he may have exaggerated the effect on Mr. Eliot's work of changes of allegiance that he himself, for one reason or another, finds unsympathetic. When all allowances have been made, however, it can only be said that, with the solitary exception of *The Rock*, *The Family Reunion* is the worst poem of any pretensions that Mr. Eliot has yet written.

The theme is the familiar one of the disintegration of the middle classes. The occasion of the family reunion is the Dowager Lady Monchensey's birthday. It is also the occasion of the return of Harry, her son and heir, to the family seat after eight years' absence. A year before the events dealt with in the play Harry's (undesirable) wife had been lost from a trans-Atlantic liner. He believes (whether rightly or wrongly we are not told) that he pushed her overboard, and the play is a psychological study of

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remorse complicated by the motifs of ' sin ' and ' expiation ' and the introduction of the Eumenides borrowed from classical tragedy. A friendly reviewer has compared the play to a story by Henry James. I should feel inclined to choose a less exalted name. In spite of the difference of setting, it is a *cas de conscience* of the kind made familiar by the novels of M. François Mauriac. It lacks the extraordinary competence of that writer and though I did not see the production at the Westminster Theatre, I cannot believe that it possessed anything like the entertainment value of Copeau's admirable production of the French writer's *Asmodée* at the Comédie Française last year. The hearty uncles and the disappointed aunts are poorly observed and the irony lacks point. The denunciation in *Murder in the Cathedral* was sometimes effective, but in this play it is tired and mechanical and sinks to the Auden-and-Isherwood level of

> We all of us make the pretension
> To be the uncommon exception
> To the universal bondage.
> We long to appear in the newspapers
> So long as we are in the right column . . .

' It is a drama of contemporary people speaking contemporary language ' runs the publishers' blurb. This is a fair specimen of ' contemporary language ' :

> What's the use of asking for an evening paper?
> You know as well as I do, at this distance from London
> Nobody's likely to have this evening's paper.

It is clear that Mr. Eliot has turned to drama in order to give the statement of his problems a wider application, but his choice of verse-drama is less easy to justify. The great dramatic poets of the past wrote their works in verse because verse could do something that prose could not. Mr. Eliot's choice of verse, however, seems to have been prompted merely by the belief that poetic drama is a good thing and ought to be encouraged. ' Contemporary language ' can hardly be transposed unchanged into a verse-form ; it only becomes effective when it is deliberately stylized as it was in *Sweeney Agonistes*. It is a curious fact that since Mr. Eliot took to writing drama his verse has become pro-

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gressively less dramatic. There is scarcely anything in the present play which can be compared for dramatic effect to the public house scenes in *The Waste Land* or even to the experimental *Sweeney*. Its main interest, indeed, is as an illustration of the decline which began with *The Rock* and continued through *Murder in the Cathedral* and *Burnt Norton*. There are lines which have something of the tensity of *Gerontion*—

> And death will come to you as a mild surprise,
> A momentary shudder in a vacant room

—but these are occasional flashes, and for the most part one has the impression that Mr. Eliot is imitating his early successes, that his verse is an artful verbal construction which does not correspond to any fresh perception. When he writes, for example,

> I came
> Once for a long vacation. I remember
> A summer day of unusual heat
> For this cold country

—one feels that the 'unusual' has been put in from without in order to give 'significance' to a commonplace statement. In other places the trick becomes crude and vulgar:

> Weaving with contagion of putrescent embraces
> On dissolving bone.

A comparison between

> What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
> Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
> You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
> A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
> And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
> And the dry stone no sound of water

and

> To and fro, dragging my feet
> Among inner shadows in the smoky wilderness,
> Trying to avoid the clasping branches
> And the giant lizard. To and fro.
> Until the chain breaks

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scarcely needs comment. The passage from *The Waste Land* expresses a genuine, a tragic sense of instability which is completely realized. In the second, the ' inner ' shadows and the ' clasping ' branches seem to be another example of the artificial heightening of tired feeling.

One of the most effective devices in Mr. Eliot's earlier poetry was the sudden transition from a mood of great emotional intensity to a mood of calm symbolized by references to the sea or flowers or, in *Ash Wednesday*, to religion. The device is used in *The Family Reunion*, but here it seems to be a technical device and no more.

> You bring me news
> Of a door that opens at the end of a corridor,
> Sunlight and singing ; when I had felt sure
> That every corridor led only to another,
> Or to a blank wall ; that I kept moving
> Only so as not to stay still. Singing and light.
>
> * * * *
>
> I only looked through the little door
> When the sun was shining on the rose-garden:
> And heard in the distance tiny voices
> And then a black raven flew over.
> And then I was only my own feet walking
> Away, down a concrete corridor
> In a dead air.

The ' corridor ' does not stand, as it does in *Gerontion*, for a state of genuine perplexity ; it is a convenient term with no more reality than the facile ' rose-garden,' while any doubt that might remain about the value of the passages is at once dispelled by putting them beside the relevant passage in *Gerontion* whose extraordinary economy provides the final comment on the prolixity of *The Family Reunion*.

The main impression left by *The Family Reunion* is one of hopeless confusion. It is a patchwork of uncoordinated attitudes. Something of the mood of *The Waste Land* persists in a diluted form ; but though Mr. Eliot no longer feels as he did, he seems unable to free himself completely from the old mood. On the other hand, the fresh attitudes—the religious interests and the

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desperate striving after some sort of transcendental experience which was so pronounced in *Burnt Norton*—are not adequately realized. The result is that the play has no centre and no significance. The confusion leaves its mark on every line of the verse ; it is apparent in the looseness of texture, the preference for vagueness and abstraction and in the muddled images. The most disquieting thing about the play is the poet's inability to translate perceptions into words. Thus we have :

> That apprehension deeper than all sense,
> Deeper than the sense of smell, but like a smell
> In that it is indescribable, a sweet and bitter smell
> From another world. I know it, I know it!
> More potent than ever before, a vapour dissolving
> All other worlds, and me into it.

' Apprehension ' gives the illusion of precision on account of its philosophical connotation and Mr. Eliot makes the most of it by putting ' that ' in front of it. In fact, it is the blurredness of the original perception that makes amplification and repetition necessary because nothing has been apprehended. So we have the repeated ' deeper ' and ' sense ' eked out with ' indescribable,' while the singularly unfortunate emphasis on ' smell ' makes any sort of clarity impossible.

The sententious, moralizing tone which has been growing in Mr. Eliot's work since *The Rock* is still more evident in this play. His hero declares to the family :

> All that I could hope to make you understand
> Is only events : not what has happened.
> And people to whom nothing has ever happened
> Cannot understand the unimportance of events.

It is not the assumption of profundity or the casuistry that irritates one, but the sense of moral superiority which in Mr. Eliot's later work takes the place of sympathy with the plight of others that marked the earlier work. What makes the superiority peculiarly exasperating is the failure to define ' what has happened ' and the repeated attempts to fob us off with counters. Thus the most intelligent of the aunts observes

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Harry has crossed the frontier
Beyond which safety and danger have a different meaning.
And he cannot return. That is his privilege.

In another passage the same speaker remarks:

It is possible
You are the consciousness of your unhappy family,
Its bird sent flying through the purgatorial flame.
Indeed it is possible. You may learn hereafter,
Moving alone through flames of ice, chosen
To resolve the enchantment under which we suffer.

In both cases the ' privilege ' and the ' chosen ' are the reality, and the ' frontier ' and the ' enchantment ' the shadow. The use of the theological terminology and the borrowings from Dante in the second passage are used to give a semblance of significance to what is said, but they somehow fail to convince the reader of the reality or the importance of the dilemma. It is characteristic of Mr. Eliot's later verse that though superficially impressive, very little of it will bear detailed examination. When one analyses it, it turns out to be a mere verbal construction. So we have:

What you call the normal
Is merely the unreal and the unimportant.
I was like that in a way, so long as I could think
Even of my own life as an isolated ruin,
A casual bit of waste in an orderly universe.
But it begins to seem just a part of some huge disaster,
Some monstrous mistake and aberration
Of all men, of the world, which I cannot put in order.

The ' normal ' can only be defined in negative terms provided that the writer has a precise apprehension of what is not normal, and of this apprehension there is no trace. In the same way, a sense of disorder implies an apprehension of order, but Mr. Eliot's ' orderly universe ' is not real, neither is his ' chaos.'

When *Burnt Norton* appeared a reviewer in *Scrutiny* took the view that it marked the beginning of a new phase in Mr. Eliot's development. Although I have never felt able to share this view, the case made out for it was a strong one and could only be

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received with respect. It seems to me to be impossible to defend *The Family Reunion* on these or on any other grounds. It fails where *Burnt Norton* failed, but it is without the redeeming features of that poem, and criticism cannot be forestalled by remarking jauntily (as Mr. Eliot's hero does after one of the ' big scenes ')

> That was only what I should like to believe.
> I was talking in abstractions . . .

For there seems no reason to hope that we shall ever get anything but abstractions after this.

MARTIN TURNELL.

EUCLID ON HELICON

THE POET'S DEFENCE, by J. Bronowski (C.U.P., 7/6).

' I have tried to write criticism as reasoned as geometry,' writes Dr. Bronowski in his *Foreword*. If we applaud the intention, we do so with the caution appropriate to the terms in which it is couched. And indeed, Dr. Bronowski would seem to share with Euclid the illusion that in geometry we have a body of purely *a priori* reasoning ; for his ruling principle appears to be a desire to empty literary criticism of any suspicion of empirical content. ' Criticism has too long helped itself with false poetic tricks and with vague words, Value, Form, Content.' So Dr. Bronowski wipes the slate clean, dispenses with the factual assumptions involved in possessing a critical apparatus, and proceeds to the careful logical analysis of the concept of poetry as revealed in the beliefs of poets.

After such dignified assurances that he has nothing up his sleeve, it is a little disappointing to find Dr. Bronowski producing the well-thumbed pack of critical pasteboards, Nature, Virtue, Wit, Imagination and so on, and proceeding to endless shuffling of them ; to find a flaw in his argument is to feel that one has caught someone cheating at Patience. But although in this part of the book Dr. Bronowski rarely says anything important enough for one to feel stirred to disagreement, the ground covered is not without its

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value. The way in which Shelley's *Defence* is played off against Sidney's *Defence*, for example, might be adopted by English students as a useful Tripos tactic ; and in general the scope of Dr. Bronowski's argument, taking in addition to these Jonson's *Discoveries*, Dryden's essays, the *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*, and Coleridge's *Biographia*, will entitle this work to a place beside Mr. Henn's *Longinus* and Mr. Lucas's *Tragedy* among those books so popular with University English students in the early weeks of May.

His main accusation against Shelley, that he held the imagination to be concerned merely with the sympathetic interpretation of the feelings of man as a social animal, is justified, and he points relevantly to *Prometheus Unbound* in support of his contention: he might have pointed also to the comparable *naïvetés* in the contemporary Spenders and Day Lewises. But his own view of poetry, which he derives from a liberal reinterpretation of Sydney's ingenuous meditations, takes him so far from the contaminations of the world and the senses that reference to anything so tangible as the movement of a poem becomes practically blasphemous. ' The mind of man,' he tells us, ' has a knowledge of truth beyond the near-truths of science and society. I believe that poetry tells this truth.' Thus far a guarded concurrence is possible ; but Dr. Bronowski has more explicit claims to make for poetic truth. ' I believe that the mind of man has a steady shape which is the truth . . . The rules of reasoning are part of this steady shape without which man cannot be . . . The urges of passion are part of the steady shape of the mind. All these are true in all societies. They make an absolute truth, which I think is the truth of poetry.' It is surely the audacity of genius that contrives to class the ' rules of reasoning ' and the ' urges of passion ' under a single head. A sympathetic reader might re-interpret Dr. Bronowski as wishing to say that the kinds of relations that poets see between facts are not the same as the kinds of relations that scientists see between facts: and that the apprehension and communication of such facts is a matter inseparably bound up with emotion. But to try to establish the superiority of poetic truth on the basis of an *a priori* psychology, and by the enlistment on its side of the Laws of Thought as against science, is too ingenuous a form of snobbery, calculated only to make literary criticism ridiculous.

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There are times when it makes Dr. Bronowski's criticism ridiculous. The world of science is the world of sense, so the superior truths of poetry can have no parley with the senses. 'Poetry . . . is an ideal set against the senses and against worldly life.' Any kind of criticism, therefore, which concerns itself with such sensual matters as imagery or movement, is seen as an attempt to reduce to the terms of Dr. Richards's pleasure-psychology. Hence the criticism of the Original Sinner Coleridge is 'false and shoddy.' When Dr. Bronowski indicates how Coleridge's theories lead naturally to the pseudo-scientific attempts of Richards to reduce all poetry to a resolution of conflicting emotions, his criticisms are just; when he points to Coleridge's misapplication of psychology to the analysis of Shakespeare's plays, his remarks are relevant; but when he thereby supposes himself excused from any attempt to discover if and how a poem operates—an undertaking which Coleridge's approach first made possible—he virtually abandons any serious attempt at literary criticism.

'Wordsworth is the last of the line of poets which runs through Sidney, Jonson, and Dryden.' It is to such observations as this that Dr. Bronowski's approach to poetry leads him; for having abandoned the world of sense, he finds himself left with nothing but the world of Ideas; and what is important in a poet, therefore, is his common stock of ideas in general and his views on poetry in particular. 'That is why the plainest past criticism is the criticism written by poets: because their poems tell us what their words and their standards mean.' Now such an approach to poetry is not without its uses. In the case of some poets, the structure of their ideology is so closely related to the quality of their verse that a consideration of the former can be relevant to an evaluation of the latter. For this reason Dr. Bronowski's remarks on Shelley and Swinburne are interesting if somewhat unoriginal, and his comments on Housman and Yeats are in places quite cogent; but it is unlikely that he will succeed in convincing by an analysis of these poets that begins and ends with their ideas anyone not already convinced. And the severe limitations of this approach become obvious when it leads Dr. Bronowski to find *All For Love* a better play than *Antony and Cleopatra*, and to class Keats with Tennyson and Swinburne as 'a poet with little moral thought.'

It is possible that I have misunderstood Dr. Bronowski's

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thesis ; I would like to believe it so, and it seems not unlikely, as he appears to have included among his initial acts of grand renunciation a refusal to avail himself of the normal resources of English grammar and syntax ; though it should be added that his atomic periods are entirely appropriate to the train of his thought, which operates as on an Inner Circle, progressing in short dashes, and returning every so often to the place from which it started. It is to be regretted that the initial starting-point was so ill-chosen.

R. O. C. WINKLER.

MODERN POETS IN LOVE AND WAR

THE STILL CENTRE, poems by Stephen Spender (Faber and Faber, 6/-).

POEMS AND SONGS, by Gavin Ewart (The Fortune Press, 4/6).

POEMS, by F. T. Prince (Faber and Faber, 5/-).

AUTUMNAL JOURNEY, a poem by Louis MacNeice (Faber and Faber, 6/-).

The blurb tells us that Mr. Spender considers his new book of poems as ' an exploration of the human condition—the analysis of experiences at once intensely personal and common to all men.' This is an aim that does not, come to think of it, seem startlingly unexpected in a poet, and it's because Mr. Spender fails, on examination, to stand up to it at all sturdily that one feels suspicious, despite his overt pretensions, of his validity *qua* poet. One doesn't, heaven knows, want a poet to ' re-orientate ' one's nervous system by, as it were, incessantly prodding one in the solar plexus, but I think one might reasonably look for a little more excitement than Mr. Spender offers. I believe he means well, and some of his sentiments are certainly very true ; only I might be tempted to suggest that Mr. Spender's verse reminds me of what was, after the works of Bartók and Webern, perhaps the most memorable feature of last year's I.S.C.M. festival—a programme-note to Koffler's *Third Symphony* which informed us that ' apart from the Third Symphony Koffler has written two other symphonies '—were it not that this statement boasts a quality of classical perfection

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that Mr. Spender's incompetent technique cannot hope to rival.

Since the time of his first volume Mr. Spender's verse has grown more difficult in the sense that it is more difficult (or more boring) to read. It is sometimes unintelligible because it is rhythmically flaccid and it is rhythmically flaccid because it is unintelligible—because, that is, it manifests no more clarity of feeling than Mr. Spender's critical prose commonly exhibits clarity of thought.

> There swims within my life a fish
> Which is the deep and glittering wish
> Evoking all the hills and waters
> Of sensual memories.
> Your image and those days of glass
> Being lost become no loss
> But change into that image
> At the centre of my thought,
> Itself no less precious
> Than the original happiness.

As far as I can make out from the context this seems to mean that a week-end in the country may be well worth remembering. And passages like the following

> Now all these
> Drink their just praise from cups of waves ;
> And the translucent magnifying lights
> Purify the achievement of their lives
> With human bodies as words in history
> Penned by their wills.

are so grossly incompetent and rhythmically inert as to make no impact on the mind at all. A verbal trickle off the back of the duck of the psyche, as Spender himself might have said ; for it is because his verse is rhythmically dead that he gingers it up with the hypodermic syringe of his ' unexpected ' metaphors.

These metaphors are really of the same frivolous order as those of such a confessed and antiquated naïve as mr. e. e. cummings. For instance, in the first of the two passages quoted above I do not see why that particular wish should be a fish rather than an alligator, a koala or a steam-roller ; nor, when Mr. Spender

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speaks of ' the gilt wave of desire ' can I understand why the wave is gilt, an epithet which, if it is anything more than decorative, suggests deceit and *guilty* and thus confuses rather than illumines the apparent point of the poem. Similarly, if by the inappositeness of ' the fat autumn evening streets ' and ' the prolonged shadows that lie down like cut hay ' Mr. Spender intends mildly to emulate Mr. Eliot's coalescing of apparently irreconcilable ideas he offers no justification for it in the texture of the poems: one experiences Mr. Spender's ' daring ' metaphors no more than his clumsy or conventional rhythms, they merely administer a series of jolts to which, become habituated, one soon responds as faintly as to the soporific rumble of an express train. Speaking of trains reminds me, however, that the Spenderian simile has its occasional careless raptures. I like to think of all England lying beneath the Midland Express ' like a woman with limbs ravished ' ; and it must have been an anxious moment for the young lady who ' filled her linen night-gown as the air fills a balloon ' when her lover ' buried his eyes in her breasts like rough quartz in a mine.'

When a theme does emerge Mr. Spender's interests do not seem to have changed substantially from those of his blue-eyed youth. The Spanish war reminds him that war is futile and that the young man whose tweed cap rots in the nettles would have been ' a better target for a kiss '—(*Ultima Ratio Regum* is actually one of the simplest and most sincere poems in the volume, with only one blatantly manufactured image). For the rest, he still has a proper indignation about slum children and hopes that one day they will run naked and uninhibited into the Empsonian books ; he still writes nostalgic Georgian love-poems that (almost) innocently rhyme:

> Now I climb alone to the dark room
> Which hangs above the square
> Where among stones and roots the other
> Peaceful lovers are ;

he still dislikes the tweeded bourgeoisie but wistfully believes in ' the furred and future bloom Of their falling falling world ' ; he still has fits of the jitters with his ' guts on skewers of pity ' and he still writes poems about trains: he continues to indulge in passages of a wearied Shelleyan rhetoric:

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O law-giving white-bearded father,
O legendary heroes, sailing through dreams
Looking for land when all the world was sea
And sunrise, O bare-kneed captain of my first school,
O victors of history, angry or gentle exponents
Of the body as an instrument which cuts
A pattern on the time, O love
Surrounding my life with violet skies . . . ;

and he retains his affection for snow, aeroplanes, and flowers. All these things Mr. Spender does less prettily than in the earlier volume ; the lisping lyrical swell—' abrupt and charming mover,' after all quite fetching in its simply sentimental way—is gone and for it the ' philosophical content ' of his more ambitious ventures is poor consolation. Listen to these lines about Napoleon—I select them at random:

All your thoughts were pouring yesterdays
With blood and flags and smoke and men
To fill the hollows of today.
Being all memory you forgot
The narrow shaves of time. But the lean world
Famished by you, and eating back again
Upon your fall, in all its bones and hunger
Was—like the unemployed that stare
With eyes from the stone edges—avidly Tomorrow.
The kings of yesterday might still have saved
Your throne for you—because you were a king.
If one, touching your shoulder,
Could persuade you to measure
Your claims against your present power,
The stature of your body in a mirror,
And not against that superhuman shadow
Struck by the sunset across your empire . . .

* * * *

And so on for pages until one can't
Help talking like this and can't help thinking
It must be easy to write verse like Mr. Spender's when
He's being most pretentious. And when he's simple

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Then it's simpler still, because one can make it
Rhyme, if one wants, but if one can't
Think of a rhyme it doesn't
Matter, because this poetry's modern . . .

None the less, Mr. Spender's verse has, as we have seen, the decency to deal with romantic or childish themes in a manner that is usually most highminded. Only seldom do Mr. Auden's tricks obtrude (' boys, grass, the fenced-off deer . . . '), whereas Mr. Ewart is an Audenesque echo. The collocation is unfair to Auden for Ewart's sensibility is really closer to that of Cole Porter and Noel Coward. These Poems and Songs contain one admirable sentiment:

Beware of sex
With its thousand necks,

as the Bishop said to the Chorus Girl. But the bad girl apparently wasn't listening, being lost in her bad, bad thoughts.

Between the Scylla of Mr. Spender's gauche high-mindedness and the Charybdis of Mr. Ewart's slick low-mindedness it is pleasant to tread a wary path with Mr. F. T. Prince, a poet whose name is new to me. Compared with Spender he is professional, an accomplished craftsman if one of limited invention ; compared with Ewart he manifests an adult and cultivated mind. The virtue of his verse is its lack of pretension ; he is content to do a small thing and to do it charmingly. His rhythm is never difficult or complex but it is surely poised, in its way a delicate and a subtle achievement. Mr. Prince's voice may be a slender one, lacking strength and variety ; but it is a genuine voice and a personal manner.

I suppose Mr. Prince has read Pound's translations from the Chinese for his manner has much that is Chinese in its urbane suavity, its quality of acceptance and resignation, as well as a suggestion of Pound's maliciousness. But his touch is tenderer, kinder, more gossamer-like. Consider such a poem as *False Bay*:

She I love leaves me and I leave my friends
In the dusky capital where I spent two years
In the cultivation of divinity.
Sitting beside my window above the sea

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In this unvisited land I feel once more
How little ingenious I am. The winter ends,
The seaward slopes are covered to the shore
With a press of lilies that have silver ears.
And although I am perplexed and sad I say
' Now indulge in no dateless lamentations:
Watch only across the water the lapsed nations
And the fisherman twitch a boat across the bay.'

Here there is a typically aloof yet sensitive response to deep but very simple emotion, clinching introspective feeling in the 'concrete' particularity of the last line, and it is a quality of acceptance and tranquillity, with a hint of ceremony in the verse's gentle gait, that is very rare in modern poetry. This ' Chinese ' feeling is noticeable even in such a tiny bagatelle as *The Token* in which the movement and the selection of detail give a personal overtone to verse that seems purely descriptive ; and it informs too the touching—the epithet seems, without any pejorative implication, appropriate—half-rhyme and shift of rhythm at the end of *In a Province*:

The tears that fall from my eyes have wet my hands
Holding the reins of my horse. How many hours
Were sweet to me because of women! These showers
Bring to my mind that day among pale sands,
Call to mind how one came with me unwillingly
On an evening warm as another country's noons
And all seemed of long ago among those dunes
And under a clear sky, under a clear green sky.

Like the Chinese poet Mr. Prince can weep to think of Time and Loss and Separation and the other fine themes that are as old as the hills, and yet preserve a glint in his eye, remain detached and almost amused. He can treat serious themes lightly, but his frivolous poems are never merely frivolous:

To a Man on his Horse

Only the Arab stallion will I
Envy you. Along the water
You dance him with the morning on his flanks.
In the frosty morning that his motions flatter

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He kindles and where the winter's in the wood
I watch him dance you out on delicate shanks.
And lashes fall on a dark eye,
He sheds a silvery mane, he shapes
His thin nostrils like a fop's.
And to do honour to his whiteness
In remembrance of his ancient blood
I have wished to become his groom
And so his smouldering body comb
In a simple and indecorous sweetness.

This is of course a very slight poem but its charm presupposes technical control and surety of intention. Its peculiar fragile wit is manifested in the sprightly movement and in the use of assonant rhymes (note for instance the insouciant twist given to the last line) ; and it is present in almost all Prince's most characteristic images (' that fever over, To which my passion lit Dry sticks of unlucky wit ').

In the longer poems *Words from Edmund Burke, The Tears of a Muse in America, An Epistle to a Patron* and *Chaka*, Mr. Prince adopts a fluid conversational technique that—both in brief phrases like ' that cunning agony of rectitude ' and in the texture of more extended passages such as

Among gossip of moist leaves, tongues of an upstart court
To my gaudy establishment as general
Many emissaries, bitter, brought the crane's feather
And offered many tokens to placate, including
Sea-shells and a quantity of melons

—somewhat resembles a flimsier version of Mr. Pound's *Propertius* and that possibly suggests, not that Mr. Prince is influenced by, but that he has a lively admiration for, the dramatic verse of Ben Jonson. The tone is of course whimsical rather than tough, and the point of these more elaborate exercises seems to me to emerge but vaguely. Nevertheless, each contains passages that are a lesson to Mr. Spender in the agile manipulation of conversational metres, and the high-fantastical, rather than oriental, mythological furniture that, as it were, inhabits the poems, as well as an occasional preciousness of phraseology, are quite distinct from the comparable

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effects in such a poet as Wallace Stevens, for the verse remains human and passionate within its narrow convention. How human it is one realizes most clearly, I think, in passages in which the movement reminds one of the later Yeats:

> A beautiful girl said something in your praise.
> And either because in a hundred ways
> I had heard of her great worth and had no doubt
> To find her lovelier than I thought
> And found her also cleverer, or because
> Although she had known you well it was
> For her too as it had been once for me
> Thinking of her: I thought that she
> Had spoken of you as rare and legendary . . .
>
> Because you are all things and because
> You show the world the glitter in the face
> Of that all-but-extinguished race
> Of creatures who delight in and desire
> Much less the fuel than the fire:
> I wish that when you call for supper, when
> You sit down, guests and serving-men
> May seem light-bearers planted on the stair,
> Lights in the roof, lights everywhere:
> So that as if you were a salamander
> Your sensuality may wander
> In a community of flames and breathe
> Contentment, savouring wine and wreath.

The first part of this quotation from *To a Friend on his Marriage* has not Yeats's sardonic vigour but in its slenderer, more whimsical fashion has a comparable mellowness and proud austerity. The fantastic element in the latter part of the quotation is Mr. Prince's own contribution but it is, more humorously, perhaps more frivolously ironic, an extension of the same attitude. I do not think we need complain that Mr. Prince's verse embraces so little or that his longer poems are incompletely realized; slight though it is, his verse comes nearer to being poetry than that of many a contemporary versifier who is ten times as earnest. And if defence is called for, Mr. Prince provides it himself in a passage from a

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poem called *At a Parade* which beautifully reconciles his exotic with his Yeatsian characteristics: (the naïve image in the fifth line seems to me in the context justified, and delightful)—

> We watch the only eagles in the world,
> How under the crimson flags they have unfurled
> They ruffle in furs and plumes . . .
>
> And standing together and watching you and I
> Have thrown our hearts like caps into the sky.
> For as I serve you, so I find
> I would be another of that kind
> And martialize
> Luxurious lucid mind and eyes
> To celebrate the moving world.
> And though a madness is unfurled,
> Though rage and greed would be at blows,
> And Europe's noisier than a bawdy-house,
> What else can I be good for but to praise
> And to defend the world, even in these days?

This passage is one of the very few in Mr. Prince's volume that contains a *direct* reference to the 'criminal century' we live in; yet these amiable and elegant musings could have been produced only by a man alive in and aware of this century. On the other hand Mr. MacNeice's long pseudo-autobiographical poem is, like his earlier volumes only more so, ostensibly concerned with the Contemporary Situation but doesn't convince us that he is, as a poet, aware of anything at all. No doubt thousands of nice young men felt as Mr. MacNeice felt about the September crisis and about their experiences during these 'disturbing times'; they didn't therefore feel entitled to publish their ruminations as poetry or even as prose, and prose, dished up in metre, is what *Autumnal Journey* virtually is. The Contemp. Sit. is a dreadfully threadbare business in itself and in Eliot, in later Yeats or in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* it's the distinguished sensibility that makes it absorbing. It is all very well for Mr. MacNeice blandly to remark:

> All that I would like to be is human, having a share
> In a civilized, articulate and well-adjusted

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Community where the mind is given its due
But the body is not distrusted,

—he might as well be the Poet Laureate airily demanding a tall ship and a star or so to steer her by ; of the Contemp. Sit. his verse remains not a criticism but a symptom.

This poem is not as muddle-headed as Mr. Spender's because there is nothing in it to be muddle-headed about, but I think it is even more boring. It ambles along in an Audenesque music-hall jog-trot for 96 pages of which not one is either better or worse than the next, in which there is no trace of a personal sensibility or of any ability to do anything with words except to manipulate them in accordance with facile and established formulæ. All the stock ingredients of the Auden-Isherwood drama are introduced in due order—the retired generals and spinsters in deck-chairs, the symbolic poodle, ' his eyes inept and glamorous as a film-star's,' the parodies of jazz songs, the ironies at the ' Glory-to-God-in-the-Lowest-and-peace-beneath-the-earth ' level, the descriptions of factories, rubbish dumps (rhyming with petrol pumps) and bungalows ' in lath and plaster ' ; and all the ' rich ' families have sagging tennis-nets on spongy lawns in dripping shubberies. There is also a lot of the ' Come on boys, we aren't afraid of bogies, Give us another drink ' stuff, with the bogies winning on points all round, despite the handicap of a coil of rope round the neck, and there is an invocation to

the hunchback,
The gentleman farmer, the village idiot, the Shropshire Lad
To insulate us if they can with coma
Before we all go mad.

The general conclusion seems to be that things are Pretty Bad, or as Mr. MacNeice more picturesquely puts it, ' the peaks have fallen in like dropping pastry,' but this is a conclusion that in these days even the toughest materialist can hardly have been dubious of beforehand. Mr. Auden's earliest verse spoke with a new voice if one uncertain of intention and *Sweeney Agonistes* once and for all transmogrified the twentieth-century jitters into ' something rich and strange ' : but the trouble with MacNeice's poem, which lives in no personal creation, is that we have heard it so

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often before. Shake up all the Auden-Isherwood-Day-Lewis-MacNeice poetic and dramatic productions of the last few years, dump them out helter-skelter, and the sense of them would not be substantially altered. They are all identical and already have the quaintly lavendered air of a period-piece.

But it must not be thought that Mr. MacNeice offers us no consolation. He ruefully admits that

> It is so hard to imagine
> A world where the many would have their chance without
> A fall in the standard of intellectual living
> And nothing left that the highbrow cared about,

and he's a bit disillusioned about the value of The Classics—

> . . . how one can imagine oneself among them
> I do not know,
> It was all so unimaginably different
> And all so long ago—

but none the less he can indulge in little monologues of moral reflection during the course of which he decides (without perhaps a dazzling display of originality) that one's personality can properly manifest itself only through contact with other people and that on the whole life is better than death if only because one is inescapably born to it. The final pages are optimisitc in a brusquely practical way:

> What is it we really want?
> For what end and how?
> If it is something feasible, obtainable,
> Let us dream it now,
> And pray for a possible land
> Not of sleep-walkers, not of angry puppets,
> But where both heart and brain can understand
> The movements of our fellows ;
> Where life is a choice of instruments and none
> Is debarred his natural music . . . etc.

So ' the equation will come out at last ' ; one can only hope it will.

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But how can anyone pretend—how can Mr. MacNeice pretend, as he seems to when he remarks in a preface that *Autumnal Journey* is not a ' didactic ' poem since poetry must in the first place be honest—that this stuff has anything to do with the mysterious processes, the developed sensibility, out of which is born poetry? for any fool who has read the right books could—and many of them do—manufacture it by the yard. Mr. MacNeice's first volume betrayed a semblance of real if unformed talent ; in this present poem his feelings about such events as the September crisis do not, at their best, differ materially from those of the average sensible 'man in the street,' and to his feelings about more personal topics the man in the street would be most often ashamed to own. This book would not be worth reviewing at all did one not know that it will be acclaimed as a poem of ' some importance ' whereas Mr. Prince's modest little volume will pass unnoticed. Mr. Prince can make a tiny sort of poetry out of a whimsical and private-seeming meditation ; Mr. MacNeice has been to the Spanish war along with Mr. Spender but it does not seem to have made any impression on him except in so far as it provides more incident to be juggled into the all-too-familiar arabesques. And when Mr. MacNeice falls in love on page 20 he hasn't much to say about the young woman apart from this:

> Frivolous, always in a hurry, forgetting the address,
> Frowning too often, taking enormous notice
> Of hats and backchat—how could I assess
> The thing that makes you different?

Well reelly, even Mr. Porter has grown weary of answering this one: *O là le p'tit quelqu' chose*!

Nowadays they call it (don't they?) UMPH.

W. H. MELLERS.

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